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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

MM. LAVAL and Flandin conferring with the British Government in London, while General Göring hunts and talks with Marshal Pilsudski in Poland and Japan tightens her grip on China—is there a sinister connection between these events? Some people see in them a further proof of the thesis that the capitalist world is preparing war against Soviet Russia. That may not be far from the thoughts of Göring or of the Japanese generals. But it would be a mistake to find any concerted purpose in the capitalist world. These politicians are frightened and eagerly seeking "security," and the best hope is the formation of a real collective system. Russia is ready for commitments; Germany, rearming whether we like it or not, is the problem. There is no sense in refusing to recognise the *fait accompli*; the question at issue is whether by doing so now we can enforce conditions that will limit this rearmament and make possible a new effort for general disarmament. It is not yet clear what further guarantees the French want as a price for co-operation. What would a "reaffirmation of Locarno" mean? What new arrangement about air sanctions is any good until we get down to the proposal to internationalise the air? After all, it was a French proposal. Would this not be a good moment to reconsider it?

Japan and China

The Japanese offensive on the Jehol front stopped almost as suddenly as it began last week. The halt may be only temporary; but at the moment attention has been transferred to the Mongolian border, where there has been an ugly little clash between Outer Mongolian and Japanese-Manchukuoan troops, in which each side asserts that the other was the aggressor. Some anxiety is felt lest this should be the prelude to trouble with the Soviet Union, since "Red" Mongolia, though an independent Republic, is under Russian influence and patronage. But we do not believe Japan is at present seeking trouble in that quarter. Her immediate game appears to be what was hinted at in Mr. Hirota's speech last week—the capture of China by a mixture of cajolery and intimidation. The object is to get China away from the League and the Western Powers, to replace European and American advisers and experts by Japanese, and to suck her into an Asiatic alliance, in which Chinese independence would be a polite term for dependence on Japan, and would be guaranteed by Japan on that understanding. There has long been a pro-Japanese section in China, and Chiang Kai-shek himself may have leanings that way. But it is doubtful whether he—and still more the great mass of the Chinese—is prepared to walk so lightly into the spider's net. Conversations between Chiang and the Japanese are opening, as we write, in Nanking; and we should have more information before long.

The U.S.A. and the World Court

The Senate, despite Mr. Roosevelt's adjuration at last-minute private conclaves in the White House, has refused to endorse the adherence of the United States to the World Court. In international affairs, this refusal is a minor nuisance, calculated to weaken the League of Nations and to make the renewal of Germany's allegiance less likely. But the decision is of far greater importance internally, because it is a rebuff from the newly elected Senate to the President, and is likely to prepare the way for further recalcitrance on the Senate's part. Mr. Roosevelt has recently, in his general handling of policy and especially in his attitude to the N.R.A., shown signs of trying to come to a better understanding with Big Business, and to allay the fears of the more conservative sections of opinion. For this willingness to compromise, the Senate has now rewarded the President with this slap in the face—a slap that is all the more significant, because probably, in the past, the Senate rather than Mr. Roosevelt represents the general tendency of articulate American opinion. We shall misjudge the situation if we take too seriously the Senator whose repudiation of the World Court took the form of saying "to hell with Europe," but we shall do well to note that the President has on this issue at length met with a serious reverse at the hands of Congress.

The I.L.O. and Shorter Hours

While the Minister of Labour in this country has been discussing the possible reduction of working hours with representatives of the employers and the Trade Unions, the Governing Body of the I.L.O. has been meeting in Geneva to consider what is to be done at this year's International Labour Conference about the proposed draft Convention for a shorter working week. The Minister of Labour has asked the employers and Trade Unions here to go into the question industry by industry, in order to see what can be done in each particular case. Rather in the same way the I.L.O., having given up hope of a Convention to be generally applied, is now trying to select a few industries in which an initial experiment can be made. The present suggestion is to schedule public works, building, iron and steel, and glass, and to try to secure a Convention that will be applied in the first instance only in these industries. The draft includes no provision for maintaining wages in face of the proposed reduction in working hours, as it has been found impossible to make an acceptable draft embodying any such safeguard. In these circumstances, even if a Convention is accepted, it seems likely in many countries to result rather in spreading the work over more workers than in any real increase in employment. Building and public works seem to have been selected because they have already, as a rule, shorter working hours than most industries, because they are internationally non-competitive, and because they are largely under Government influence. Iron and steel is a shift industry, in which it is fairly easy to reduce hours by employing extra shifts. But it is very doubtful whether even these proposals for an emasculated Convention stand much chance of acceptance, especially with Germany out of the I.L.O.

The Wavertree Rebels

Conservatives, being united by instinctive prejudices, split less than progressives who are usually divided by rival theories. Mr. Baldwin, who represents the respectable prejudices of Englishmen better than any other man alive, has so far prevented a Conservative split over India, and we suspect that he will survive the new onslaught from Wavertree. For one thing the Parliamentary Committee of the India Defence League, as the rebels call themselves, are not altogether happy about the support given to Mr. Randolph Churchill by their leading members without the full Committee's consent. They meant an attack on the Government in due form and, though they have been persuaded by Mr. Winston Churchill not to withdraw, they obviously realise that they have been dragged into what is no more than a political stunt. Meanwhile the tragedy of India itself develops; while English politics are enlivened by our squabbles about what is good for India and whether we are "giving India" too much or too little the terrible poverty of the Indian villages is untouched, and, as the letter from Mr. C. F. Andrews in our columns this week shows, the repression of the Indian Government is so sustained and so ruthless that we may well wonder if this country will have a friend left there by the time the new Constitution is ready.

As Far As It Goes . . .

Mr. Stewart, as Commissioner for the Special Areas, has issued a memorandum about his intentions. It is, on the whole, like the right policy seen through the wrong end of the telescope. We are left with the impression that Mr. Stewart means well, and that what he does will be not so bad as far as it goes, but that it will go only an infinitesimal way. Mr. Stewart has, in fact, been bound hand and foot by the terms of his appointment. He must not subsidise schemes which are receiving help from other Government sources; he must not trench on the fields of other Departments without securing their consent; he must not subsidise purely profit-making enterprises; and so on. There seems to be no end to the number of things he must not do. Accordingly, what he can do does not amount to very much. He can aid the salvage work of the National Council of Social Service, the Society of Friends, and other voluntary bodies; he can second the efforts of the Ministry of Labour to transfer workers to less depressed areas; he can help with the provision of allotments, small holdings, and special holdings for group settlement; and he can aid public works which are useful, but not eligible for subsidy under other Government schemes. By using these limited powers, Mr. Stewart may accomplish valuable work of a secondary order; but it is plain that his powers do not extend to anything calculated radically to alter the situation in the depressed areas. Multiply what Mr. Stewart is proposing to do by one hundred, and you might have a scheme that would make some real impression on unemployment.

The Overcrowding Bill

The new Housing Bill, which came up for its second reading this week, represents a *volte face* on the Government's part. It restores the subsidies for building which were so eagerly and so foolishly abolished a year or two ago. Sir Hilton Young of course protests that they will only be temporary—which we take leave to doubt. His opponents attack them as inadequate for the all-important

purpose of providing houses to be let at rents that the poorest tenants can afford. The figure of 10*s.* a week or so, which the Minister of Health talks of, is too high for masses of the people. The other prominent feature of the Bill—the standard of overcrowding—is sound in principle; but the actual standard fixed is too low. We ought not to contemplate the normal use of living rooms for sleeping in. Other points of substance on which critics have fastened are the compensation to slum landlords; the favour shown for blocks of flats (though we think that there is much to be said for this, within proper limits); the partiality for public utility societies and for house management commissioners; and the likelihood of exploitation by the building material merchants. Taken as a whole, the Bill is better than we had dared to expect from Sir Hilton Young. But it falls far short of what a Minister and a Department in real earnest would attempt.

Railway Electrification

In a speech made on Tuesday to the Railway Stockholders' Union, Mr. Whitelaw, chairman of the L.N.E.R., was at pains to deny that his company was contemplating any general scheme of railway electrification. Why anyone should pretend surprise at this we scarcely know, for railway electrification, on anything more than a limited number of suburban lines, would be a very expensive and speculative investment for the railways to embark upon without public help, or at least guarantee. If the main-line systems are to be electrified they ought obviously all to be tackled together, and the whole railway service replanned on national lines as a unified enterprise. Arrangements would have to be made with the Central Electricity Board for the supply of current, and for the execution of the big capital works which railway electrification would involve; and, in face of the recent history of railway shares in the stock markets, there would be no chance of getting the huge capital needed for electrification without a public guarantee of interest, at any rate for a period of years. This amounts to saying that, if we want the railways to be electrified, we must bring them under public ownership; for the requisite guarantees of interest could hardly be made so long as they remain in private hands. The main railway lines certainly ought to be electrified; but we do not blame Mr. Whitelaw for insisting that the responsibility must fall upon the public.

A Three Year Plan for Education

The London County Council's "Three Year Plan" for education is an encouraging advance, even if it does not go far enough to satisfy every enthusiast. It is not a stunt programme, but is based on the principle of balanced progress in all departments. Among its outstanding features are a reconditioning scheme that will bring all elementary school buildings up to date in their amenities within a definite period; an increase in the number of "special" places in the secondary schools; and new evening institutes. A comprehensive inquiry is promised into the nutrition of schoolchildren, and the dental service will be extended so as to cover each child every year. The whole plan involves a capital expenditure of £2,500,000, with an addition to the normal maintenance cost of £428,000 in the first year, £622,000 in the second, and £721,000 in the third, and falling thereafter to £439,000. The increase in the rates is estimated at not more than 1½*d.* in the pound. That is not a price which any sensible citizen of London will grudge paying for improvements in a great social service.

Market Gardening

Charitableness and common sense have prevailed among the market gardeners of Potton, who had threatened steps to prevent the immigration to their district of forty unemployed miners from South Wales. The miners are to be settled on the land, and the local objection was that their arrival would merely mean more unemployment among the indigenous population. Fortunately, a more open-minded attitude has now been taken up, and the miners when they arrive will be given a decent reception and a fair deal. Whether they will succeed in making a living remains to be seen. Very possibly in Potton they will; but in general the wisdom of settling the workless from industrial districts on the land is open to the gravest doubt. Here, it seems to us, is one of the weakest points in Mr. Lloyd George's plans. To put half a million extra men on to the land sounds a nice enough idea, and consorts pleasantly with the current rural sentiment; but surely it is placing the cart rather obviously before the horse? It will be grossly unfair to these half million to put them on the land until the land is ready to receive them—until, that is, agriculture has been organised a great deal further than it is now and has been turned into a profitable undertaking. At the present time agriculture cannot keep those already employed in it, let alone offer a livelihood to half a million more. It would be useful to have a few more details of just what Mr. Lloyd George's ideas are in this direction. In what districts, for example, does he suggest that this wholesale dumping of town-bred workers should take place? The more you plan and mechanise agriculture to make it pay, the more you tend to displace men, not take them on—at all events in the early stages.

The Coroner's Court

The Government's decision to appoint a Committee to inquire into the procedure of coroners' courts is the logical response to the outcry raised by the conduct of the recent inquest at Weymouth. We commented at the time upon that case and upon the fact that it was by no means an isolated one. Coroners' courts are subjected to no rules of evidence and should in no way ape the functions of a court of justice. But coroners can, and often do, permit practices in their courts which are highly prejudicial to the rights of persons under suspicion and seriously against the public interest. Moreover it constantly happens that a coroner—whose sole legitimate function is to determine the cause of death—uses his position to elicit or suggest facts concerning the deceased and/or his associates which have no real bearing on the point at issue. Why should coroners be allowed to cause acute and unnecessary suffering to the deceased's relatives and friends? Too many coroners seem to forget that their courts have nothing to do with morals, and that the private life and habits of a person into whose death they are inquiring are only their concern in so far as they are relevant to the cause of death.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 *Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.*1. *The postage on this issue is: Inland,* 1*d.; Foreign,* 1½*d.; Canada,* 1*d.*

THE NEW DEAL FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

THE Government had a bad quarter of an hour when the House of Commons resumed its sittings on Monday. Everybody expected some criticism of the unemployment assistance administration; but few were prepared for the storm of indignation and protest that came from all sides. Conservatives, National Liberals and MacDonaldites joined with the Opposition in denouncing this New Deal for the unemployed and warning Ministers of the feeling in the country. The defence put up by Mr. Oliver Stanley was hardly taken seriously even by himself, for he has sense as well as humanity; and the unequal struggle ended in his capitulation and the promise of reforms. The reforms will need to be drastic and prompt if the Government are to recover before the General Election from the damage that they have incurred.

The trouble is not confined to those areas where the Board itself had anticipated a row. The reductions in relief are indeed most spectacular in South Wales—amounting, it is said, to something like £900,000 in the aggregate in Glamorganshire and £300,000 in Monmouthshire. But they are startling enough in other depressed districts, and in many which are not ordinarily ranked among the depressed. Mr. Kenneth Lindsay declared that there had been reductions in 80 per cent. of the cases in his constituency of Kilmarnock. Mr. Robert Boothby, who made a fierce onslaught on the Government, exposed the plight of his Scottish fishermen. In the town of Peterhead, he said, there had been in forty-two cases which he had investigated "an average reduction of 6*s.* 11*d.* per household per week, as compared with the old transitional payment, and the reductions ranged from 2*s.* 6*d.* up to 18*s.* 6*d.* per week." Mr. Mander told of the cuts in Willenhall, near Wolverhampton—38*s.* reduced to 25*s.*, 26*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.*, 17*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.*, and 28*s.*, 26*s.*, 21*s.*, 16*s.* 3*d.*, 13*s.* all reduced to *nil*. These are but a handful taken from the mass of cases quoted in the House of Commons, and supplemented *ad nauseam* from all over the country.

What could the Minister of Labour say in face of this evidence of the havoc that has been worked in the homes of the unemployed? He protested that it was unfair to talk of the reductions and to ignore the increases, which there had undoubtedly been in many places, though he naturally could not say where. When he ventured the suggestion, "Try Lancashire," he was reminded by the Member for the Ince division that this was not much to boast about, since the Lancashire Public Assistance Committee had been notoriously harsh in its administration. But anyhow, he was obliged to admit that it was small consolation for a man who got less to know that someone else was getting more. He urged, secondly, that many of the reductions were inevitable, because there had been laxity hitherto—illegality, indeed—in the administration of many of the Public Assistance Committees. That may be the fact, though it does not prove that the policy pursued by these P.A.C.s is immoral, as some people seem to assume. And in some cases the argument is liable to be a boomerang. Mr. Lawson pointed out that in Durham, where public assistance scales are dictated by the Ministry of Labour's own representative, those scales have been substantially reduced. Does Mr. Stanley charge his own man with laxity?

His third line of defence was a plea for mercy and patience. The officials of the Unemployment Assistance Board were many of them new to the job, and the reductions complained of were largely the result of their inexperience. There is no doubt some truth in that. But the Government and the Board cannot be allowed to make a scapegoat of these officials. They may have been stupid, but presumably they have in general been working to the Board's own instructions and scales. And we have a pretty strong suspicion that, had they exercised their discretion in a much more generous sense, they would have been called over the coals by the Board. Whatever degree of blame for all these scandals may attach to the rigidity of the local officials, the scales and the regulations themselves are still open to censure. Miss Rathbone insisted in the House on Monday, as she has insisted before, on the inadequacy of the scales in several important points—in particular as they affect the children. She showed, too, how the basic rent system with its sliding scale turned out to be "a subtle way of taking back something which the increased children's allowance gives. The basic rent scale increases with the size of the family, and in effect the children are expected to pay a bit of the rent out of their allowance." But we need not labour this point; the Minister admits that the whole operation of the rent rule demands immediate inquiry, and it will obviously have to be revised in order to prevent a number of intolerable hardships.

Behind this looms the fundamental question of the family means test. The family means test, as we have always maintained, is a bad system. It is vicious in principle, and it has deplorable effects in practice. "Economists" are no doubt right in seeing it as a convenient method of saving some money to the Treasury, by forcing children to contribute to the support of unemployed parents. Moralists who uphold it as preserving the integrity of the family are in error; its tendency is to be a disintegrating factor. To the masses of the common people the means test, as we have it, is anathema; and even the uncommon feel growing doubts about it. Mr. Stanley agreed that there was obviously a hardship (a hardship which even the Poor Law does not inflict) in a father-in-law having to go to his own son-in-law, living in the same house, for every penny he wants to spend. He need not have stopped at that relationship. Is there not also hardship and often bitter humiliation in fathers being entirely dependent on their sons and daughters, or brothers and sisters on each other? But the family means test will not, of course, be abandoned by this Government; all we can hope for is some modifications that will make it a little less obnoxious.

These modifications and the rest of the promised changes in the administration, including the setting to work of the Appeal Tribunals, will not brook delay. Apart from any question of humanity or justice, the Government will want to save their political bacon. They have managed to still the storm at Westminster, but it has not abated in the country. Meanwhile, we may pay a tribute to the House of Commons for the way in which it has asserted itself on this occasion. The British Parliament, with all its faults, has not lost its traditional capacity for voicing popular sentiment on a great issue.

And by the same token this episode is a devastating comment on the simplicity of those who believed in "taking unemployment out of politics." Unemployment ought not to be, even if it could be, "taken out of politics," and we agree with the *Times* in rejoicing that "a system affecting between three and four million people was not wholly removed, as some would have wished to remove it, from the purview of Parliament." But who wished to remove it? Not the "Socialist theorists," whom the *Times* proceeds to lecture on the shortcomings of bureaucracy. "Socialist theorists," as well as practical Socialists, wanted the able-bodied unemployed removed from the Poor Law. They certainly did not want the body which was to deal with them to be independent of parliamentary control. They protested against the extent of the independence given to the Unemployment Assistance Board by the *Times*' own political friends.

The Board's first essay in independent administration has been lamentable; its next, under the correction it has got, should be better. But apart from good or bad, hard or generous, administration, it is highly doubtful whether it can make a success of its task. A system which divides the relief of unemployment among three bodies—the Ministry of Labour operating the insurance scheme, the Unemployment Assistance Board and the Public Assistance Authority—bristles with difficulties. The logic of the division is specious, and the three bodies do not make a trinity.

THE HONEYMOON THAT FAILED

THE Saar plebiscite has been a great disappointment to many Frenchmen. I do not mean those Socialists and Radicals who had hoped for a 30 per cent. minority vote, which would have been a blow to Hitler's prestige; I mean those Frenchmen who expected that the Saar plebiscite would prepare the way for a Franco-German honeymoon. They believed Hitler when he spoke of the Saar as "the last obstacle," and were anxious to get rid of the Saar at any price. They shuddered at the thought of a substantial minority vote, which would have led to interminable discussions at Geneva, and heartily agreed with Herr Bürckel that even a miniature Saar of fifty square miles—a sort of Whipsnade for refugees—would be the cause of endless trouble between France and Germany. They were as determined as any Nazi that the Saar, that every inch of the Saar, should go back to Germany without any further ado. I remember young Stanislas de La Rochefoucauld at the Hotel Excelsior at Saarbrücken, two days before the plebiscite, treating the German waiters with superb rudeness: "Ober! Bier!" he would bawl across the room, digging, with a sweeping gesture, a dictatorial forefinger into the table space before him. "Ober!!! Bier!!!"

"You do treat these Boches like a lot of niggers, don't you?" I remarked.

"Of course, I do," he laughed. "I want them to be sick of 'foreign domination,' and to be sure to vote for Hitler in the plebiscite. To hell with the Saar! *Et qu'on nous foute la paix avec le status quo!*"

La Rochefoucauld is perhaps an extremist. Like his colleague on the *Petit Journal*, Bertrand de Jouvenel, like Montagnon of the Neo-Socialist Party, like a few others, he is fascinated by Hitlerian dynamics and believes that France's salvation lies in a direct understanding—perhaps an alliance—with Germany. This attitude is perhaps sincere, though it is hardly free of *snobisme*, of a sort of parlour Hitlerism; and as a policy it can hardly bear a close analysis.

But these parlour Hitlerites are not the only people in France who were anxious to get rid of the Saar. M. Laval often made it clear that his only desire was to see the Saar return painlessly to Germany. He claimed to have persuaded the British Government to send troops to the Saar (which was not quite the case), and liked to think that, but for his diplomatic achievements, the Saar plebiscite might have become the cause of a grave Franco-German conflict. If Barthou had been still at the Quai d'Orsay, Senegalese and not British troops might have policed the plebiscite. As soon as Laval took office at the Quai d'Orsay, he made it plain that, even if it came to the worst, France would send only some Alsatian policemen, but no troops—either black or white—into the Saar. But even this would not have been very satisfactory, and Laval was a happy man when Britain offered to take charge of the plebiscite.

Germany showed no appreciation of M. Laval's policy, and speaking at Kaiserslautern three days before the plebiscite, Herr Bürckel glibly described the status quo people as the "agents of France." I happened to be at that meeting, and what struck me most was not what Herr Bürckel had to say, but the reactions of the audience to his speech. His remarks about "the agents of France" were greeted with yells of approval from the old men and the young men and the storm troopers and the women; on the other hand, his statement that "the Führer and I want lasting peace and a sincere understanding with France" was received with complete and almost uneasy silence. One felt that the thing was accepted by everybody as an official lie; after all, the Führer "had to say these things."

Since the Saar plebiscite Germany's behaviour has gone from bad to worse. The plebiscite was celebrated in Red Indian fashion, and hailed as a great victory over France—though France, heaven knows, did not move a finger to help the status quo people. There were, it is true, a few Frenchmen in the Saar who had read some sentimental guide-books about Louis XIV and Vauban's fortifications at Sarrelouis, and who did the status quo people more harm than good by sticking up a few posters about France, sweet land of liberty; but these people had no connection whatsoever with the French Government. Still, the plebiscite was hailed as a victory over France and her status quo agents. And two days after the plebiscite Hitler gave an interview to an American journalist whom he asked to realise what a "terrible sacrifice" was involved for Germany in her surrender of Alsace-Lorraine. And, impressed by the results of the plebiscite, some of the Berlin papers thought that the procedure might be profitably applied to a few other places—what about Memel, to begin with? Later, it might also be tried out in Austria, and in Danish Slesvig, and in Eupen-Malmédy, and in Danzig, and—much later, of course—in Alsace-Lorraine.

And then, there are those guarantees that Germany gave in Rome two months ago in connection with the Saar plebiscite. She promised, for instance, that there would be no victimisation of the anti-Hitlerites after the plebiscite. Yet, even before Germany has taken over the Saar, the Nazi terror is already in full swing.

Can France be blamed for no longer believing Hitler's promises? There is in Conrad Heiden's perfectly objective "History of National-Socialism" an illuminating chapter on "Hitler's words of honour"—a catalogue of his broken promises which is to-day of even more topical interest than the often quoted passages from *Mein Kampf*. Several additions could be made to Heiden's catalogue since the Saar plebiscite.

Laval who, until the plebiscite, was prepared (if only as a matter of policy) to give Hitler the benefit of the doubt, is frankly disappointed now, and it should not be surprising if the latest German tale about "Germany's bleeding frontiers" has an important effect on the French attitude during the London talks this week. German rearmament is admittedly an accomplished fact; but the French do not see any object in legalising this rearmament merely for the "moral effect" that this might have—for is there any certainty that this moral effect would improve the international atmosphere in Europe? Would not such a legalisation, on the contrary, stimulate

rather than restrain, Germany's war preparations? Germany's return to Geneva, which would accompany such a legalisation (whether immediate or gradual) would, no doubt, have a symbolic value; but would German opinion really interpret such a return in the true "League" spirit, and not as a victory of Hitler's policy and as a belated justification of his door-slamming exit on October 14th, 1933? I remember a German telling me that day that Germany would not return to Geneva until "the others had climbed down."

But, even supposing she gets that satisfaction, there remains another question. When Germany is back at Geneva will she play the game? The French doubt it, and are therefore not likely to consent to the legalisation, unless they obtain some guarantee. There are two sets of guarantees—first, a reinforcement of the British Locarno guarantee, and second, the consolidation of organised security in Europe through the Eastern and Rome pacts. M. Laval told the Russians and the Little Entente that there would be no legalisation of Germany's rearmament unless she joined in these pacts; at the same time he said that, even if Germany and Poland refused to join the Eastern Pact, he would persevere with it, even if it had to be built up on a new basis. Does that mean that, in the event of Germany's refusal to join the Eastern Pact, the question of legalisation would be left in suspense indefinitely? One may doubt it; for France is not likely ever to adopt a policy which would be absolutely contrary to Britain's policy. But France's "surrender" might cost Britain some additional Locarno guarantees.

The fundamental trouble is that nearly everybody in France has lost faith in the efficacy of a Disarmament Convention, unless this Convention is accompanied by specific guarantees of security, as distinct from the general guarantees actually incorporated in the Convention. As regards the latter there is, for instance, the question of armaments control. M. Pierre Viénot, who is the great French expert on the question, tried to explain some time ago how the system of automatic control could be applied not only to the democratic countries, but also to Germany. I confess I found it highly unconvincing, as far as Germany was concerned; for who, except perhaps Dr. Schacht, can make head or tail to-day of German finance, with its numerous inflationary devices, or discover where and how and through what channels money is being spent on armaments? Nor could the Control Commission expect much help from any good German—and under Hitler every German must be good. At its best, armaments control in Germany could provide only a very rough idea of what was going on. It would be something, but scarcely enough. And, moreover, what would be the sanctions to be applied if the Convention were more or less blatantly violated?

The problem of German rearmament, and the guarantees of security, are a matter of life and death to France, and the French are naturally pained when some of the English papers become impatient over France's "lack of generosity." The Saar has shown that France can gain nothing by being generous to Hitler. If the legalisation of Germany's rearmament can bring her any additional guarantees of security, she will legalise this rearmament. But if it means no more than Germany's return to Geneva—where she will assume an air of respectability which will enchant Mr. MacDonald—well, what's the good? The peace of the world will be no safer. It might even be less safe if Mr. MacDonald began again to treat France as a naughty child. Without any better guarantees than that, Germany had better go on with her illegal rearmament, the French say. So, independently of the eventual Convention, they are going to ask for guarantees of security both in the West and in the East.

Perhaps they are right. For there is one illusion of which everybody in France, but not everybody in England, has been cured—and that is that Germany can be a League Power in the true sense of the word. Like Japan, she stands for everything that is contrary to the League. She may use the League; but she can hardly *belong* to it. It is significant that Frenchmen like Bertrand de Jouvenel who believe in a Franco-German entente, always emphasise the fact that such an entente can have nothing to do with Geneva, and that it can be concluded only *outside* Geneva.

ALEXANDER WERTH

Paris, January 29th.

A LONDON DIARY

WHEN I had read the chapter on "Capitalism, Socialism and Peace" in Sir Norman Angell's *Preface to Peace* (Hamilton, 7*s.* 6*d.*) I said to myself: This is absurd. This controversy about the connection between capitalism and war ought to be capable of solution. There are problems which cannot be settled because they involve differences of value or depend on knowledge that we have still to acquire. But these difficulties do not exist in this case and the peace movement is split from top to bottom by this difference of opinion.

Brailsford and Laski, whose doctrine about capitalism and war Norman Angell once again attacks, both want peace as much as he does, both agree with him in regarding the international anarchy of sovereign States as the cause of war, and both accept the fundamentals of the thesis of the *Great Illusion* which he first expounded more than twenty years ago, and which he once again brilliantly expounds in the first half of his *Preface to Peace*. They differ from him on certain propositions about the nature of capitalism. They say that capitalism is a system which by its nature leads to war. Angell replies that Socialists and capitalists have a common interest in stopping war just as much as they have a common interest in stopping plague. Both these statements may be true. The capitalist impulse to obtain new markets and raw materials may often be self-destructive and yet continue to the end. Capitalism may be the cause of war and yet not benefit by war. I do not see how anyone can deny the economic basis for Japanese aggression in Manchuria or doubt that this sort of aggression has led to war and will probably do so again. On the other side it is obviously not enough for the Marxist to reply, "I told you so, capitalism is making war again and the League cannot stop it." Russia has gone into the League in the hope of trying to stop the war that is threatened by Japanese capitalism, and Norman Angell is surely justified in asking Brailsford and Laski to explain what line of pacifist action arises out of their economic analysis. Are psychological remedies no good for an economic disease? Is it impossible to change behaviour by explaining its folly or altering political institutions?

* * *

It may well be that the historian of the future will decide that the most important development of this age is not poison gas or television, but the growth of a new and generally accepted type of language. It is the language of the telegram, the advertisement and the newspaper headline. In literature it is at least as old as Mr. Jingle, and its highest development is to be found in passages of James Joyce. It appears at first to have no grammar and no rules, and almost any part of speech can take the place of any other. It relies, as all new languages must do, to a very large extent on guesswork, on the reader, that is, having enough familiarity with the subject matter to be able to understand what is meant without the aid of logical relations. If the headline reads "motorist refused a licence," for instance, nothing in the words themselves tells us that this means not that the motorist refused to give the licence, but that he was refused the licence when he asked for it. Or again, what would anyone trained in English, but not in this new language, make of the headline "Seaside Drinks Battle"? What part of speech is any one of these three words? I take these examples, which can obviously be paralleled in the press any day, from a most interesting book by Dr. Heinrich Straumann entitled *Newspaper Headlines* (Allen and Unwin, 10*s.*). Dr. Straumann writes primarily as a grammarian. But I think there may be sub-editors who would be interested to discover that they

are creating a new language which has to be classified and parsed on entirely new principles, and there will be others, like me, who are intrigued by the social possibilities. After all a very large proportion of the information imparted in the world to-day must be conveyed by this ambiguous and theoretically indefensible technique. I suggest that it is most likely to be through this technique that the problem of an international language is solved. None of the devices of international language experts is so simple, none has so small a vocabulary, none possesses so large a proportion of international words already in use.

* * *

I have called attention before to the questionnaire issued by the Bata Shoe Co. to prospective employees in England. The document is in front of me now. It is like a police record. Among the fifty questions which must be filled in, the applicant is required to say not only why he left his last job, and so forth, but why he wishes "to become one of our workers," the Christian names and type of employment of his father and mother, the number of his brothers and/or sisters, whether his father is a Trade Union member. Further, he is asked for the names of any workers he already knows in Bata's and for an elaborate series of medical details about his health and that of his family, whether he is "financially sound and free from all debts," an abstainer and non-smoker, how he employs his spare time and whether he possesses a cycle. Number twenty-four is direct: "What are your political views?" The odd thing is that there is no reference to religious opinions—they are apparently no longer regarded as an important clue to character or docility.

* * *

It is not only the working classes whose opinions are taken into account when applying for jobs. I have recently seen, for instance, a letter from the secretary of a well-known insurance company, refusing an applicant in these terms:

> As I informed you, the directors give preference to applicants who are prepared, if required, to join the Territorial Army, and as we have other applications for the vacant position, I am afraid that we shall not be able to offer you an appointment.

* * *

Are we really going to see the Luddites vindicated and Samuel Butler's prophecy fulfilled? Are we going to see the wholesale scrapping of machinery in order that men may do unnecessary work? I ask these questions after reading a report in the *Manchester Evening News* of a meeting of the Bury Town Council at which it was decided to throw out of use mechanical diggers, concrete mixers and ramming machines in order to make employment for men with shovels, picks and barrows. By this means the cost of the road improvement scheme in question is nearly doubled and the length of time allowed for the job half as long again. But lots more men will be given work—twenty to thirty are necessary, for instance, to take the place of one on the mechanical diggers. This 'ere progress does keep on going on, don't it?

* * *

Apropos of Göring's hunting expedition in Poland a friend of mine who was recently in Berlin relates a story that suggests that people in high position at least are becoming less afraid to criticise the leading Nazis. It was announced on a public occasion that Göring, who had been expected, was unable to be present. He was rumoured to be away shooting. A well-known public personage who heard this remarked in a clear voice: "General Göring is fond of shooting and it is true that he sometimes shoots animals."

* * *

Another German story:

> Adolf Cohen went to the appropriate office in a German town and asked permission to change his name. The official, outraged at this open attempt by a Jew to escape the proper consequences of his name and race, severely rebuked Cohen. Adolf Cohen replied: "You have misunderstood my application to change my name. I have no wish at all to change the 'Cohen.' I want to change the 'Adolf.'"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5s. for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Mr. John Hadfield.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Everything that is of value in civilisation has been created and evolved and preserved in the countries of the West—in Britain, France, Germany and Italy.—*Fascist Quarterly.*

The Bible is the inspiration of Louis. He always reads it before entering the ring, and then, according to one of his seconds: "All fortified and everything, he just wades in and knocks the other guy's block off."—*Daily Express.*

Sir,—One is constrained to plead that a generous measure of public sympathy and pity be extended and conveyed to the "Tallyman" and Bernard Smith for their fervent and ecstatic acceptance of the comical and irrational stuff of the evolution of man. Have they ever considered the possibility, the real probability, of the ape and his similars being the actual decadent and degenerate descendants of the human race? If there is any relationship at all between them, this is the most feasible explanation.—Letter in *Leicester Mercury.*

In character the Irish Terrier is what may be defined as a "perfect gentleman," and moreover one is thoroughly aware of his status. For instance, the one I owned would always differentiate between guests, in whom he displayed a courteous interest, and the servants, whom he treated with polite indifference.—J. Wentworth Day in *Evening Standard.*

For a long time I used as my sanctuary the words: "This, too, will pass," and they never once failed to prove themselves true. . . . Do you worry? Try not to. . . . Lie still on your back; think of your body as a row of pebbles, and drop them one by one into a pond.—*Daily Sketch.*

Why call it the "New Deal"? Is it a game of cards we are playing—possibly a gamble? Is it not bad enough that Britain has copied the negro-American dance music? Need she copy American habits of speech as well.—Letter in *Observer.*

I know a man who has spent his "honeymoon" at Filey every summer for the last twenty years; and he is certainly not alone.—From a Guide Book to Yorkshire.

THE AMERICAN CONSUMER REBELS

"WE who have to bring in business must get out before the beloved customer and shout, search, halloo, promise, concede, coax, be funny, coo, thump, seek, knock, punch, and *get* the order. . . ." With these words a New York advertising agency explains its mission. Another such enterprise confides to its clients: "It would be a liberal estimate to say that only 25 per cent. of the business transacted in this country each day is done as the result of a 'natural demand' . . . and it is on the 75 per cent. that we make our living and you make yours."

Now while these statements may not be typical of all advertisers, they do at least strengthen one's suspicion that commercial propaganda is a mixed blessing from the standpoint of the consumer. This of course applies not only to America, but to all other countries. What we consumers would like to see in advertisements is not catchy slogans nor even sex appeal; we want helpful and objective information regarding the goods to be sold.

Let us for example consider razor-blades. The would-be buyer of blades, on entering a suitable shop, soon discovers that there are a dozen or more brands for him to choose between, ranging in price from a halfpenny to fivepence or more per blade. He has already heard a good deal concerning several of the makes, thanks to advertisements. But those advertisements gave him no means of judging as to the relative efficiency of the different brands. If he buys the dearest, he may for all that he can tell be paying several hundred per cent.

too much; if he takes the cheapest, he may have to throw away the whole packet after the first shave. He has neither the time, the training, nor the apparatus that would probably be necessary if proper tests were to be made as to the sharpness and staying power of the various makes. Clearly, his great need is some sort of guide that will tell him of the faults and virtues of each brand, and so enable him to decide which is likely to prove the soundest investment. And if he were contemplating the purchase, not of a relatively insignificant article like a razor-blade, but of, say, a motor-car, then the value of such guidance would be all the greater.

America is popularly supposed to be the home of aggressive salesmanship; it is fitting therefore that America should also produce the first organisation designed to equip the consumer with a means of resisting the seller of shoddy wares. The organisation in question is called "Consumers' Research," and its procedure is to arm the man in the street with a guide such as has just been described.

For the sake of convenience, Consumers' Research has been given the form of a limited company. Its finances are based entirely upon voluntary contributions, the vast majority of which come from regular subscribers, each paying not less than $2 per annum. The number of subscribers has risen in spectacular fashion from 1,800 at the beginning of 1930 to some 50,000 in 1934. During 1933, the organisation received a total income amounting to over $110,000. To make sure that its integrity shall be above suspicion, Consumers' Research bluntly refuses to accept any gifts from persons known to be connected with businesses producing goods for retail distribution.

In return for their annual subscriptions, members receive periodical bulletins in which the virtues and defects of competing brands of goods are carefully compared. The necessary information is obtained from investigations made either by the organisation's own permanent staff, or by consultants whom it has employed because of some special qualification for dealing with particular articles.

For example, tests may have been carried out upon the different makes of vacuum cleaners. If so, the members will be provided with a report as to the precise amount of dirt removed by each make, and also with a critical appraisement of the various engineering features. Glittering exteriors will be discounted. Or the organisation may have been analysing different brands of well-known soaps, and so discovering which of them represents the best value to the housewife. Or it may have been assessing the merits of rival kinds of petrol, or of alarm-clocks, or of sardines, or of a hundred and one other common articles. In addition, the bulletins will place at the members' disposal information concerning hygiene and dietetics —for example, on the best treatment for greying hair, or on how far the recent boom in the popularity of vitamins was justifiable.

Normally the reports take the form of tables, in which are arranged brief descriptions of the rival commodities that have been tested. The price of each brand is added, in terms of a common denominator, *i.e.*, packet foodstuffs are measured by the pound instead of by the packet. Final judgment is expressed upon each in the form of "marks"—one for quality ("A," "B," or "C"), and another for cheapness ("1," "2," or "3"); thus "A1" means good and cheap, "A3," good but dear. The reports are designed for filing, and by consulting her files, the housewife can usually find a full description of any make of commodity that she happens to be interested in at the moment.

By way of illustration, the following is the summarised report of tests upon four well-known brands of tinned fruits, which we shall charitably re-christen "W," "X," "Y," and "Z":

A. Recommended.

"W." Not all firm. Flavour good. 26 cents per lb., drained fruit ..... A1.

B. Intermediate.

"X." Several minor defects. Flavour good. 19 cents per lb., drained fruit ..... B1.

C. Not Recommended.

"Y." Some of fruit broken or mushy. Colour and flavour good. 21 cents per lb., drained fruit ..... C1.

"Z." Mushy pale fruit. Good flavour. 31 cents per lb., drained fruit ..... C3.

British housewives will be gratified to learn that brand "Z," which this investigation showed to contain the least satisfactory fruit and yet to be the dearest of the four, is popular in this country and may usually be seen in a prominent position on the display counter of any good family grocer.

Not unnaturally, the proprietors of those brands of goods that receive hostile criticism from Consumers' Research hotly resent the publication of the bulletins. Therefore to prevent legal reprisals, the bulletins are distributed only to members, and are labelled "Confidential." Apparently this device, coupled with a formal promise of secrecy by each member, is sufficient to protect the organisation from libel actions when mistakes are made in the bulletins. If goods are reported upon unfavourably, their makers usually prefer bluster to a reasoned counter-statement. Thus the manufacturers of a notoriously ineffective fire-extinguisher tried both bullying and coaxing in order to prevent Consumers' Research from expressing a frank opinion concerning the contrivance. No attempt was made to show that the tests had been misleading; instead, the Vice-President of the manufacturing corporation sent a booklet in which were the names and addresses of many satisfied customers, and also some photos of his sales force at their annual banquet. His accompanying letter ran:—

> We also enclose a circular which was produced after one of our general conventions, and we feel certain that any group of fair-minded men, upon examining the circular and looking at the pictures of our sales organisation, must come to the conclusion that this group of high-type men could not be induced to put their lives into the sale and distribution of an article which you, in your advice to your clients, refuse to recommend.

Such in brief is Consumers' Research. Its merits, from the purchaser's standpoint, are obvious. So far as the onlooker can judge, its chief defect is that lack of funds has sometimes prevented it from purchasing an adequate number of samples when making its tests. However, if its membership continues to grow at the present pace it ought soon to be in a position to remedy this fault.

Would an organisation like Consumers' Research prove successful in Britain? The legal difficulties, though greater than in the United States, should not be insuperable. It may be that we are over-timid about the law of libel in this country. Indeed, a Scots court has already decided* that a company whose aim is to give confidential information to clients is, if it makes a mistake, "privileged"—*i.e.*, malice on its part must be proved before damages can be obtained.

At any rate, one cannot but wish that a comparable institution did exist for the protection of the British consumer. There is no particular reason for supposing that American salesmen are naturally less scrupulous than their European brethren; rather would it appear that selling technique is a function of mass-production, and accordingly that as our industries become more highly organised, we too shall be subjected to the same sort of treatment that has at last driven the American consumer into revolt.

W. T. BAXTER

JACK HORNER

A LETTER appeared in a London newspaper the other day, calling attention to the propagandist talks in English that are commonly broadcast from foreign wireless stations. The writer had been listening-in to Rome and had heard "an English woman, speaking very clearly and talking about Italian progress in commerce and art, and telling of the Exhibition of Inventions which is to be held at Turin this year"—also promising to reply to any letters about her announcements on a later evening. This seems to have struck the writer of the letter as a good thing. "Would it not," he asked, "be a very valuable thing

* Bayne and Thomson *v.* Stubbs, Ltd. (1901), 3 F. 408.

for this country if the B.B.C. set up opposite numbers to this lady, who could broadcast for a few minutes in Italian or German, and tell the people of those countries what we are doing in Great Britain instead of leaving it to the distortions of the Government-controlled 'rubber-stamp' newspapers abroad?"

The difficulty in the way of carrying on wireless propaganda of this kind from England, it seems to me, is that Englishmen have never been, and are not now, able to agree as to "what we are doing in Great Britain." The division goes back to the wars of the Roses and probably farther. The Englishman is a born partisan, and the population of the country has always been divided into "contents" and "discontents." Since the Battle of the Boyne he has ceased to express his partisanship in civil war, but the old passion for disagreement has continued even under the most placid surface of party politics. One party of Englishmen has looked on the other party as an organisation bent upon the ruin of their common country. If asked by a foreigner, "What are you doing in Britain?" one party would reply, "We are marching towards the dawn," the other would reply, "We are going to the dogs." To the "contents" England often appears to be a suburb of Heaven; to the "discontents" she appears to a suburb of Hell. Which of these views then, is to be wirelessed abroad as a true account of "what we are doing in Britain"?

An autocracy is much more fortunate in these matters of propaganda than a democracy. An autocracy always knows what is happening in its own country. Under an autocracy progress is known to be inevitable. The citizens grow happier every day, and they all love the Government, except a handful of criminals. They are as unanimous as the courtiers who praised the Emperor's new clothes. In Italy, in Germany and in Russia, when father says turn they all turn. Opinion marches in solid unity like a well-drilled regiment. The people may not claim that they have yet arrived at perfection, but they are proudly conscious that they are going there at a far greater pace than the old-fashioned bourgeois States. They live under the glorious mass illusion that almost everything they do is something that has never been done before. If a new baby-clinic is set up, it is a symbol of the revolution that has taken place. If an obscure working woman is operated on for appendicitis free of charge by a surgeon of genius, that, too, is hailed as something that could never have happened in an old-fashioned, stick-in-the-mud society. As for the opening of a school or a free library, large parts of Europe seem to believe that such things were scarcely known before the present generation. Thus an autocracy is able to broadcast the most glowing stories of its achievements in the perfect spirit of Jack Horner.

The Englishman—unhappily, for purposes of propaganda—is only half a Jack Horner. The Government, as a rule, is Jack-Hornerish enough, but everybody who disagrees with the Government sneers either politely or impolitely and tells Jack Horner that his plums are rotten or poisonous or only a cheap imitation of plums. In autocratic countries, Jack Horner is always applauded, for the whole country is a claque; in democratic countries, Jack Horner has usually what is called a mixed reception, being applauded by about one-half of the people and derided by the remainder. Hence, if England were to begin a series of broadcast talks to foreign countries, explaining "what we are doing in Britain," she would, in order to be honest, have to speak in two voices. She would have to explain, for example, that her Indian policy was a bold and courageous attempt to weld the Empire closer together by enabling the Indian people to share in a freedom broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent, while at the same time it was a betrayal of the masses of the Indian people and of England's Imperial heritage by statesmen suffering from the craven fear of being great. Foreign dwellers in autocratic lands would, I am afraid, be merely bewildered if they heard Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Churchill broadcasting their rival views on what is happening in England as regards India. In Mr. Baldwin's talk, Britannia would appear as a calm, wise, generous mother of her peoples, conceding to reason what she would never deign to concede to terrorism: in Mr. Churchill's talk, on the other hand, Britannia would appear as a moribund old woman, dropping the brightest jewel in her crown from her palsied hands, whose life can be saved only if she is taken out of the hands of her present doctors and given a course of injections of the infallible drug, winstonine.

It may be replied that, for purposes of foreign propaganda there would be no need to give any but the official Government view of "what we are doing in Britain." It is one of the disadvantages of democracy, however, that no opposition would ever agree to the situation of the country's being misrepresented in this fashion. In Italy or in Russia, the broadcaster has the full assent of his fellow-citizens to his telling the world that the Government is doing magnificently and that its achievements are marvellous; if a B.B.C. broadcaster, however, announced to the Russian or the Italian people that Mr. MacDonald's Government was magnificent and that its achievements were enough to make a Russian's or an Italian's mouth water, what a howl of protest would go up both from the right and from the left! Mr. Churchill would at once claim the right to inform the Russian and Italian peoples that the Prime Minister is simply a reincarnation of the Boneless Wonder, and a Member from the Clyde would claim the right to inform them that the only words by which the Prime Minister could be accurately described were words that did not exist in the Russian or Italian dictionary. For better or for worse, Englishmen are convinced that there are two versions of every story, and it is one of their most treasured liberties to tell them both. Is there a single subject on which Englishmen could agree for purposes of a propagandist broadcast? Why, they cannot agree even about leg-theory bowling or Belisha beacons. If Russia had invented the Belisha beacons, we should by now have had a talk from Moscow telling how a famous Commissar had stopped his car at a crossing while a little urchin of five toddled slowly across the road. We should have had a moral drawn as to the equality that exists between motorist and pedestrian in Russia, and the inventor of the beacons would have been acclaimed a hero. England is, in comparison, a land of derision. Here no statesman is allowed to boast of his achievements without being sharply reminded of his failures. As a result, the foreigner is hard put to it to know what is happening in this country. He cannot tell for the life of him whether it is on the verge of ruin or on the verge of salvation. And a good many Englishmen do not know either. In the end, a number of them having listened to the stories of both parties, compromise by believing half of each story, like the man who, perplexed by disputes about the existence of God, formulated his creed in this fashion: "Some say there is a God; some say there is no God: the truth probably lies somewhere between these two opinions." A great poet told me many years ago that this is typical of the Englishman's ultimate attitude to all disputed matters. If it is, it is unsuited to foreign propaganda. Not thus does Rome or Moscow speak.

At the same time, I am not sure that propagandist talks on the wireless, even from autocratic countries, are nearly so effective as their organisers hope. If I listened to a talk from Germany in praise of the achievements of Hitler, I should discount much of it as propaganda. It is only when I listen to music on the German wireless that I am convinced that, in spite of her politics, Germany remains one of the great civilised nations. Music is the real international speech, and Bach and Beethoven and Mozart are better propagandists than are any of the official talkers. If the English wireless would only stop crooning late at night and model itself on Stuttgart, or aim at surpassing it, the German or the Italian would be much more likely to listen than if he were offered tedious talks about the achievements of the Government. Music hath charms, and foreigners are susceptible to them. But, as for talks, which would merely be the boasts of rival Jack Horners in the world's capitals, who would even believe them? I shouldn't, for one.

Y. Y.

Correspondence

REPRESSION IN INDIA

SIR,—We have blamed France, year after year, for not taking count of the rising tide of national feeling in Germany after the war; yet when we ourselves are put to a similar test in India we seem to be equally foolish. The defencelessness of India to-day, under the present rule of repression, which has reached something near to martial law in Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province, has been so maddening, that an explosion can hardly be avoided much longer unless the pressure is relieved.

We have made the press law so severe, that the editor of the *Modern Review* has been warned twice, and threatened with what would amount to confiscation, for publishing Tagore's articles. One of these was on Russia; the other was a brief message to the Dublin Society of Friends. The number of detenus, many of whom are kept for long years in imprisonment, seems to be continually increasing. Concentration camps, where they are kept, make life intolerable for them, as their whole future is blighted and their families brought to ruin.

The following information has been given me by one whose family has thus suffered.

> Those in jail have been there in many cases for over six years without trial; and yet the Indian penal code itself has few punishments of over five years. Many were placed before the Courts, discharged, and then rearrested. Here, there could be no question of want of evidence which could be placed before the Court. Available evidence must have been produced and have been insufficient for conviction. There are cases where a man, convicted in connection with Civil Disobedience, has been arrested at the jail gate as soon as he was released.

The writer then gives specific instances, which need not be detailed here. He goes on as follows:

> Numerous instances of suicide, insanity, infection of tuberculosis, have come to light, and the pitiable tales of neglect, torture, and cruelty are many. These reach hundreds of homes in Bengal and accounts of them are sent to members of the Legislature. The ventilation of such cases brings sharp denials, accompanied by rebukes such as were given by Sir Harry Haig in the Legislative Assembly. I wish a Committee of M.P.s could come out and receive facilities for inquiring into the misery of the detenus and their families. My own relation (he gives the name which I omit) is a detenu, at a malarial village, going through his fifth year of detention. His allowance has been reduced to 15 rupees (under £1 3*s.* 0*d.*) per month. He was a college student, champion swimmer, musician and sportsman, and must have been quite incapable of any direct connection with terrorism. He is now broken in health and was at one time suspected of being tubercular.

My friend then goes on to mention in his letter a schoolmistress, who had been arrested under similar conditions and is now shattered in health, after nearly four years' imprisonment: also a college professor, who has been in jail (as a Regulation III prisoner) for very many years and his family brought to ruin.

No one in this country can ever imagine the horror that is connected with this "detention" system. Recently, conditions have been made less inhuman, owing to continued public pressure, but the whole process of detention without trial is rotten to the core. The innocent suffer with the guilty; the police force has every inducement to bribery and corruption; and the corruption of the Bengal police is notorious. The whole Government becomes dishonest.

I am writing about what I know from personal experience, and my only regret is that I did not write long ago. While wearing Bengali dress, and therefore mistaken for a Bengali, I have been myself maltreated by the police. Some of my own students from Santiniketan, who were as innocent of terrorism as I am, have been arrested and imprisoned. Sir Harry Haig denounced in the Legislative Assembly one who signed his name to a petition asking that the Andamans should no longer be used as a penal settlement. I myself signed that petition, and came under the same condemnation. If any attention in India is called to these things the answer is usually a prevarication, and a bullying tone is adopted.

The writer from whom I have quoted states further that the number now imprisoned or interned must have risen to nearly 2,000 detenus. He gives details about the different "camps." He then goes on to say: "With the grant of reforms, under which they could honourably undertake to give up subversive activities, a huge majority would come out. You can—I am letting you know on good authority—yourself offer such assurances."

This letter is already long, but one of the deepest regrets of my life is that I did not take up this cause actively before; and I would wish to redress that mistake now if I possibly can do so.

C. F. ANDREWS

"COMPLETE IMPARTIALITY"

SIR,—In my address to the Incorporated Association of Head Masters, I did not say that school text-books were completely impartial. What I did say was, "I maintain that the books now used in our schools are absolutely and entirely free from any suspicion of being compiled in the interests of any political party. They contain neither capitalistic nor socialistic propaganda." This is an important difference. And I accused the London Labour Party of desiring to remodel school text-books in the interests of their own party. I have seen no evidence that this charge is unfounded.

W. JENKYN THOMAS

29 Gordon Square, W.C.1.

[The words which Mr. Jenkyn Thomas now quotes from his speech were quoted precisely in the same form in our leading article of January 19th. Does Mr. Jenkyn Thomas still think them true and that none of the extracts we gave from books on the L.C.C. list contained any "capitalistic propaganda"? Finally, we must add that most people have regarded Mr. Morrison's published statement is evidence that Mr. Jenkyn Thomas was mistaken in saying that the London Labour Party desired "to remodel school text-books in the interests of their own party."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—While it is quite true, as I am aware, that all the highly inaccurate and partisan history text-books you mention in your article, entitled "Complete Impartiality," are included in the L.C.C. list of books for use in schools, it is only fair to state that I, who have taught history in several of the London Central Schools, have never yet come across a school in which these books were used. I am only stating this because I should not wish the layman to get too dark a picture of the history teaching under the London County Council.

So much is left to the individual headmaster or mistress and to the particular history specialist, and there is such a wide and comprehensive list from which to select, that history must often appear two totally different subjects to a pupil who goes from one school to another. Many schools use Mr. H. G. Wells's *Short Outline of History* as a text-book—many teachers draw from Professor G. M. Trevelyan's histories. A favourite series is the Piers Plowman social history books, a most excellent one in its way, and another set with which I personally have little fault to find is *The People in the Making*, *The People in Adventure* and *The People on Its Trial* by Stanley Leathes.

However, the implication of all this is, of course, that some sort of an investigation of text-books is desirable. It is absurd that so much should be left to the individual, and that an ignorant headmaster should have such highly coloured nonsense to select from as some of the books from which your contributor quotes. I do feel that, in most cases, the young history teacher, by his training, can weigh up evidence, and would not, if left to himself, select such books. But unfortunately, he is often over-ruled, by the type of head who would like, as in so many public schools, no history after 1815 taken, because "then it becomes controversial"!

For myself, I have always been most lucky. There has never been any objection to my taking the history I want to, and as the R.S.A. history exam. papers include questions on the Factory Acts, Trade Unionism and Poor Law Reform, the nineteenth century has always received its due share of attention from my pupils. And I know many teachers who agree with me over this, and who work accordingly.

G. M. E. BARRATT

24 Homefield Road,
Wimbledon, S.W.19.

HOUSING FINANCE

SIR,—This rent and interest problem is the root cause of our poverty to-day and cannot be quickly relieved by any other method that seems to me to come within the realm of practical politics.

The proposal of issuing new currency for newly created wealth and regularly destroying the currency as the wealth decays and declines is absolutely sound finance, being perfectly honest and also brings immediate benefits. Does not it become almost immoral to go on bolstering up the present system which compels the poor to pay two and a half to three times as much for their houses as they cost?

To-day only three courses are open for the building of municipal houses. (1) Very small and cheap buildings to be let at rents which can be paid by the present poor people (producing in the near future more slums). (2) Better and larger houses at higher rents than they are paying at present, which means either the poor cannot inhabit them or they must semi-starve to pay the increased rent. (3) Erect the larger and better type of house and let it with a rent lower than the economic rent, the balance to be made up by subsidies; as all wealth is ultimately created by labour this means that those unfortunate enough not to obtain a municipal house have to pay their own rent and a part towards that of the other lucky inhabitants.

All three methods have easily recognised objections. Why delay then, in advocating a system which immediately cuts out the greatest expense and reduces by at least 50 per cent. the present economic rent?

Does not the proposal to buy up every vested interest by national bonds become ridiculously slow, grossly unfair and, worst of all, places the possessing class in a more impregnable position than they are even to-day? Let us stop these unearned gains obtained by lending to the municipality on wealth-creating schemes; the lenders do not contribute one iota towards the welfare of the community by lending their money, why should the community be taxed to repay them 200 and 300 per cent.? I have yet to learn it is right or fair to take from the poor to keep the rich.

The present unfair arrangement to-day puts Socialism and the possibility of equal material wealth generations away. The issue of fresh currency for fresh creations of wealth holds the key for the next great advance more surely than any suggested reform now before the public.

Queensferry, Chester. STANLEY PECK, C.C.,
Chairman Flintshire Labour Party

PROS AND CONS

SIR,—In his letter of last week, Mr. J. M. Keynes says: "There was an excellent little book in my youth called *Pros and Cons*, which was the perquisite of openers in a school debate." May we point out that a new and revised edition of *Pros and Cons: A Guide to the Leading Controversies of the Day*, has just been published?

We hope you will not suspect us of literary racketeering when we claim that *Pros and Cons* has had considerable influence on English family life. To the depressed wife of an enthusiastic bi-metallist or advocate of the Channel-Tunnel; to the diffident husband of an active total-abstainer or advocate of measures to prevent premature burial, it has often proved an inestimable boon. In its modern and revised version it will enable the general to cope more effectively with his son's advocation of dialectical materialism and the general's son to recover more quickly from father's favourite blow below the belt: "man is a fighting animal, you can't change human nature."

MAURICE L. RICHARDSON,
Broadway House, Publicity Manager,
68-74 Carter Lane, E.C.4. George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

NOT SMOKING

SIR,—Critic is extraordinarily lucky in "not wanting" to smoke. I say to him, in the language of Mary Baker Eddy, Hold that thought! I began smoking at the tender age of seven, and kept it up till the still more tender age of thirty-three. Then I had the good fortune to contract para-typhoid. For the first time in my life, as far as I could remember, I did not *want* to smoke. I had stopped for as long as a year before, but I had never ceased to want to smoke, and the year's abstention was horribly unpleasant. But on this lucky day, July 4th, 1916, when I was smitten with the amateur version of typhoid, I was, for the first time, unfaithful to tobacco in my thoughts. I realised it was a God-given opportunity. I made up my mind to make the aversion permanent. It worked. For about two years I had twinges of passion, but I always went back to July 4th, 1916, the day that I honestly did not want to smoke. And from that day to this, Sir, I have never touched tobacco. All the money I saved I put into Southern Pacific, at 124. It is now 16.

Newtownmountkennedy. FRANCIS HACKETT

CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT

SIR,—Mr. William Farr first ignored altogether the movement connected with my name; now he gives to your readers the impression as if (a) the Concerts at Westminster were the only events of that type, (b) they were too dear and geographically unsuitable for the large mass of children. Apparently he has not studied his subject at all, else he could easily have learned that Westminster is only one of twenty-one "Centres" constituting the Movement which is spreading all over the country; and that at most of the centres the majority of the audience pays only 6*d*. admission. Obviously the Concerts are held on different days in the week, and at different hours, according to the wishes of each locality which vary considerably between a centre say in Surrey, where the audience comprises public and girls' private as well as elementary schools; and a Yorkshire town where practically only elementary schools attend. To illustrate the position in Greater London I quote from my diary in November:

"Tuesday morning, 10 a.m. and 11.30—Hounslow. Tuesday afternoon, 5 p.m.—Stepney. Wednesday afternoon, 4.15—Reading. Friday morning, 10.45 a.m.—Tottenham. Saturday morning, 11 a.m.—Westminster."

During recent years three or four new centres have been added annually, and many localities are waiting to join the Movement which can only be built up gradually in view of a most difficult and intricate machinery, requiring first-class orchestra and conductor, "guide" of right personality, formation of local organisation, comprising Education and Civic Authorities, etc.

Mr. Farr raises the question of amateur orchestras. Experience has taught me that none exist which are good enough to perform. This movement must create the right taste and reach the highest standard, else it loses a large part of its *raison-d'être*. Also amateurs are generally available only in the evenings which are quite impossible for Children's Concerts. ROBERT MAYER

DIVINE HITLER

SIR,—I am reminded by Mr. Raymond Mortimer's reference to Carlyle and Critic's remarks on the belief in Germany that Hitler is divine, of two incidents during my experience last year as tutor in a Junker home.

"Heroes and Hero Worship" was chosen by certain Prussian schools as a set book for the "Abitur." When I was painfully leading my pupil through "The Hero as King" he solemnly remarked "The headmaster said to-day that Ruskin and Carlyle were the first National Socialists."

After the village pastor had been suspended for reading from his pulpit a pamphlet of the Young Reformers, a good Nazi pastor was sent to undo the damage that might have been caused by his utterances. By yelling at the top of his voice that Hitler is divine, he had soon reduced his congregation to a trance-like mood in which they would believe that Hitler was anything from the Caliph of Baghdad to a Pobble or Jabberwock. The pastor drew lengthy parallels between the Führer, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Jesus Christ. In face of this damning evidence I went away with a heavy heart, "Hitler *must* be God", I thought, "and worse still God must be Hitler." But both Pastor Schulze and I had forgotten Nebuchadnezzar. G. I. MORRIS

Miscellany

"CHAPAYEV"

HIGH jinks in the Soviet Union. Fun in the film world. A grand gala day with an address by Stalin, and a special birthday honours list. The Order of Lenin for the brothers Vasiliev, for Ermler, for Kozintsev and Trauberg, for Dovzhenko and for Pudovkin. The title "Honoured Workers of Art" for Eisenstein and Yutkevitch. This came as rather a surprise to those outside the U.S.S.R., for even if Ermler and Yutkevitch have been good boys lately, with *Counterplan* and the Turkish film, everybody knows that the others have kept rather in the background. Kozintsev and Trauberg have spent far too long preparing their trilogy. Pudovkin's last two efforts turned out so experimental each was withdrawn after the shortest of short runs; while Eisenstein has not shot a foot of film since his return from Mexico. Perhaps these honours are not a reward for work done so much as an encouragement for glories to come. For the Soviet Cinema is

having a real birthday celebration, its fifteenth jubilee, the first stocktaking since Lenin sent it on its way with the slogan: "Of all the arts the cinema is the most important." On the 20th February begins in Moscow a festival with all the studios displaying their best before admiring visitors from all the world, and the show piece will be *Chapayev*.

With the introduction of sound and its attendant difficulties, as everybody knows, the Soviet cinema has been going through a lean period. A blanket of crudity and slowness wrapped all its originality. That it dare venture on a jubilee is itself a sign of renewed confidence. Thanks particularly to the brothers Vasiliev. The hero of their film, Chapayev, is a leader of "Partisans" in the civil war. Rough, vaguely revolutionary, worshipped by his almost bandit following. A sort of Stenka Razin of modern Turkestan. The story deals with what, in religious terms, could be called his conversion and martyrdom. It opens with Chapayev waging a scattered war against white outposts. To him comes a political commissar, charged with the duty of making Chapayev politically reliable. Chapayev is jealous and his welcome frigid. A sort of armed neutrality exists between them. Suddenly the commissar places under arrest Chapayev's lieutenant for permitting the stealing of a pig. Chapayev is furious, and yet more amazed than angry. "I am Chapayev!" he shouts, "but who on earth are you?" "Alexander the Great was also a good soldier," replies the commissar, "but—need you break the furniture?" In the midst of the dispute a peasant arrives with the thanks of the village for the return of the stolen pig. If he cannot understand its ethics, at least Chapayev can appreciate the military advantage of the new policy.

Chapayev addresses a meeting of peasants. A spokesman asks him: "Are you for the Bolsheviks or for the Communists?" Before Chapayev can scratch an answer out of his head the peasant explains: "Because we're for the Bolsheviks and against the Communists." Chapayev rises to the occasion and replies magnificently: "I'm for the International." The commissar waits till after the meeting and casually enquires: "Are you for the Second International or the Third?" This is awkward. Chapayev suspiciously asks: "Which is the best?" "The Third," says the commissar. "Is that the one Lenin belongs to?" asks Chapayev. The commissar nods. "All right, you can count me in," says Chapayev. This is the sort of fellow he is, a very interesting type to appear in modern Soviet art as a hero. Bluff, self-willed, violent, individual.

So the film proceeds, without a shade of technical innovation: with, in fact, the utmost technical naiveté. And with material to match. Adventures, battles, wisecracks, songs and a romance between Chapayev's lieutenant and a woman machine-gunner. All commendably slick. A marvellous climax in the Tom Mix style, with the villains silencing the sentries and charging ahorse upon the sleeping camp; torches set under the thatch of the farm in which Chapayev and his lieutenant defend themselves desperately with one machine-gun against the onslaught of whole battalions armed with tanks; the feminine interest riding for a rescue; the lieutenant covering the retreat single-handed as the wounded hero swims the raging torrent; a mile-long chase with a thrill every inch. There hasn't been anything to better it since 1910 when Broncho Billy was abroad. The only thing Russian or realistic about it is that help comes just *out of* the nick of time.

Chapayev cannot be compared, but only contrasted with, the films of the *Potemkin* school. They belong to different periods and seek different ends. The montage-mongers were engaged in agitation and propaganda. By means of methods of aping reality so realistic that incidents from their films now find their way into historical textbooks among the anecdotes of eyewitnesses of the events portrayed, they convinced the intellect of their spectators. By means of attack by rhythm, they waked the spectators' unconscious to indignation and even action. *Chapayev* doesn't do this. Its audience cheers and boos like a Saturday matinée; it is thrilled, but it won't be roused to stir a finger. The whole tale is as innocent of argument as any Tom Mix. Certainly its Whites are black and its Reds are white, even to the point of caricature; but as taken-for-grantedly as in a cowboy picture. Just think of the villainy of walrus-moustached bandits opposed to pure cowboy and bluff sheriff. There you have *Chapayev*, only it is the assailants of the defenders of private property who have the sympathy here and the defenders of private property who have become the caricatures.

Chapayev is a big thing in the history of the Soviet cinema. Starting with the Moscow Art Theatre and Moskvin's gesticulations, the brilliance and profundity of Eisenstein stampeded it into a wild helter-skelter after the ultra-cinematic. Partly pendulum swing, partly the technical fact of the introduction of speech, brought the actor back with a rush. And for nearly two years the young men became sterile. They seemed to have forgotten how to handle the actor and a story, without the one becoming unbearably pompous and the other insufferably slow. *Chapayev* will be a tonic. It is uneven, but it gets across a story, it gets across character, and it doesn't lag. Most interesting of all, perhaps, to us benighted observers in the outside world, is the reflection that no picture so simple, so innocent of a desire to prove points, or even of a feeling that they needed proving—in fact so box-office could possibly have been produced anywhere but in a society that had long lost its doubts about itself.

IVOR MONTAGU

PREMPEH

[On January 30th the Governor of the Gold Coast reinstated a member of the Coomassie royal family as king of the Ashanti federation or Asante-hene. His "small" title (the longer one is too sacred for use) is Prempeh II, and he is the nephew of the last Asante-hene, who was exiled after the Ashanti War of 1896—the year in which the British finally extinguished Ashanti independence and the year before the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation began operations. In 1924, Prempeh was allowed to return to his capital, Coomassie, as a private citizen, and was given the powers of local chief (Coomassie-hene). He died in 1931.

The Golden Stool, described here, was presented to the first powerful Asante-hene, Prempeh's ancestor, by his priest, Komfo Anotchi, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is not a throne for a king, but for the "soul of the nation," for the corporate soul, that is, of all the Ashanti dead and alive. The soul is chained with golden fetters in a sitting position on the wooden stool.

When Coomassie was finally occupied by the British in 1896, the stool was hidden away, and in 1900 the Governor of the Gold Coast, erroneously imagining that he was being deprived of a right due to him as representative of the Queen, caused the Ashanti Rebellion by demanding that this stool should be produced for him to sit upon. The stool, however, remained hidden until 1920. As a result of anthropological research the British Government has wisely abandoned its claim to this stool—which, when at length discovered, proved after all not to be made of pure gold.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

IT was four, tense, damp and sweating hot, for that night a thunderstorm was going to break over Coomassie from the north, a lightning stroke was to plunge into the old fort, and some of the pillar cotton trees were to fall in the forest nearby. But we didn't know that then, as we drove down the road and passed the Hausa soldiers, green fezzed, putteed, but bare foot as they marched at impatient sentry-go under a sky too crowded with sun for colour. Dark pink Ashanti earth, beaten hard by foot-carriers, the road had soon left the town and cut into the bush. I sat back in the cushions and thought of Prempeh.

Human sacrifice, the golden stool, the typewriters rattling in his palace offices, each in disconnected visual image or abstraction, ran through my mind. His face that afternoon when we had visited him, with me a young district officer who hung on me like a sucker, talked to stop me talking, and asked question after banal question while I watched. "How are you?"—Prempeh was dying, everybody knew it. Prempeh knew English, but he would not speak it. "Tell him that I am well," he said coldly. James, his son, a clerk in a bow tie who was in command of the palace typewriters, interpreted with a smile. He had learnt to smile diplomatically in those thirty years of exile in the Seychelles. James had been born and bred in exile.

But his father could not smile. The District Officer opened his mouth again, and Prempeh twitched his silk robe so that its intricate thick pattern of black and gold, "little trees" the Ashantis called it, shook like loose grass under a wind. His eyes narrowed with bitterness and pain. His nose, I noticed as I forgot the D.O. and relapsed into ethnological study, was broad, but fine and straight in profile. His lips were thin, not cruel but not too scrupulous in the Quaker sense. His forehead was authority. The back of his head rose almost to a point, as in so many aristocratic Ashantis. The firm outlines, filled in with the sad imperiousness of his face, moved me from science to sympathy again. He loathed the D.O.

Two beautiful boys stood on either side of Prempeh's chair. Behind him was his sandals-bearer, a pair of sandals in his hand whose thongs were twisted with gold. Prempeh had a pair like that on his feet. But the great King of Ashanti, stripped though he was of his power, must yet never touch the earth with his feet. If a thong broke, there stood the attendant with spare shoes. Bored, a herald squatted on the ground, crying in all formality. "Tie, Tie." That means "listen" in Ashanti, and heralds say it all the time at ancestor worship rituals and in the law courts. But why now? Can it have been Prempeh's one irony: the D.O. went on talking.

We rose to go, but Prempeh sat there quite motionless, his face taut and unresponsive. We said good-bye, and his mouth moved in their tonic language, but the tones came hard from it: its kingdom had shrunk to a palace and a pension.

Outside the new stucco building and past the small cannon which bordered the gravel, the D.O. prattled on. Hadn't I heard of the human sacrifice case the police had got against Prempeh? No? Good Lord, it would blow the old fellow sky high. Some native from the northern territories had been sacrificed when Prempeh visited Juaben two years ago. Yes. And Prempeh's feet had been washed in the blood—a sign of tribal loyalty, said the D.O. by way of mitigation. Prempeh wanted to recover all Ashanti again, so he had not stopped it, hadn't reported it either. Report . . . police . . . discovery . . . the courts . . . difficult for Prempeh . . . would stop his intriguing though.

So I had taken the car, though if you opened the windows the pink dust flickered in and if you shut them the sodden heat stifled you: but I drove straight off into the bush to get away from the D.O. and see the outer villages, where life still grows within the confines of Ashanti formalism of which Prempeh was once the centre; to see above all things the sacred lake Bosomtwi, on which it is forbidden to fish with hook or line, hand or seine nets, or to use any kind of boat or paddle or oar. It is the only lake in Ashanti, and it has no outlet.

We drove on, my native Moshi and I. He was a smiling negro from French territory—the sort of man who fifty years back would have been slaved to the Ashanti forest belt, made to serve in the Ashanti army, and finally assimilated to the Ashanti race. But now he was a free import, just a chauffeur. He did not understand these reserved, silent Ashantis, who unlike all other Africans only laugh in season and have neither fear nor liking for the white intruder. He drove: I looked. The trees grew taller, the creepers tangled the roadside underbrush and climbed the trees. A great red fragile flower appeared on the bush—in the distance like a poinsettia, "Blood of Ashanti" was its name. We were in thick forest and immense cotton trees patterned the road in shadow fiercely pricked by the sun. Their trunks were like pillars and their bases stood four-square with flying buttresses at each corner. Yet they tear and rip to the lightning and the Blood of Ashanti showed above many blackened cotton trees that lay prone. Blood on the wood: it was from this wood that Ashantis made their blood-covered stools, I thought.

It is soft to the knife, they are wonderfully carved. The Golden Stool, the soul of the nation—its two sides were curved like the horns of the altar, three uprights sustained the seat.

When the Stool marched through Coomassie the Ashantis looked on the symbol of their national unity. The people's soul was bound to it by golden fetters, which Osai Tutu had wrenched from the arms of the King of Denkera as he sat playing draughts with his wife two hundred years ago. From it depended the gold death masks of Denkera, of Gyaman, the King from French Ivory Coast, of Sir Charles McCarthy, Governor of Sierra Leone in 1824. Victory after victory had attended it, and each victory added to its golden spoils. It came down from heaven in a black cloud. Since it came, the Ashantis had been one, warriors, organisers, rulers, artists, a social group formal but living, proud but active and intelligent. On the stool-carrier's neck it sat, a huge state umbrella covered it, sword bearers, executioners, hornblowers and pages escorted it. It never rested on the ground but on an elephant's skin, and the King himself dare put only his elbow on it. In defeat and social disintegration the Ashantis had kept from us their Golden Stool.

A stool passed us in the road, and I woke to the world of sensation. The forest had receded, by the roadside clustered dark-leaved cocoa trees, dropping fruit. A rustle of lustrous olive green leaves, curled and shaped like toy boats, and the cocoa beans showed up brown in the shadow and littered the earth with fatness. Soon we were in the village, which had just erected new latrines of which it was unconscionably proud. "These Lats cost PRENZU £40" was inscribed on the swish wall in letters of some size and whiteness: and nearby were trays drying cocoa. But high above both stood a stick, forked at the top where it held a bronze basin simply and beautifully moulded: in it lay an offering to Nyame, the supreme god. Lifted up in the air it was offered to nature, and ants eat the plantains inside.

Behind, the houses were old Ashanti. They were square courts with spiral ornament. In one I saw a weaver at an old loom making Ashanti silks of a royal tartan. I asked him about the "Lats" "That's for the Government," he said.

"Bosomtwi is near here," whispered Moshi, and we left the village and drove up a hill. Steeper and steeper it rose, but suddenly harsh sky filled the road space and below us glittered Bosomtwi, a perfect circle, five miles across they say, but seeming smaller, so sheer were its sides. A solitary eagle hovered over it, its sides were thick forest and 700ft. high. No water flowed out of it. "Every year," said Moshi, "it rises a little." Twenty-six villages were on the shores and each had five ancestor villages below the lake. Everything was a perfect symmetry in Bosomtwi. "Like the Ashantis," said Moshi, "I no like Ashantis, they stay one and same thing, too. No change. To-morrow, you see they have king again." I forget the rest of Moshi in the heat of the day and the symmetry of that sacred lake, till the eagle flew away overhead.

Prempeh died a week later. But I remember the rest of what Moshi said. Yesterday Prempeh's nephew was installed King of all Ashanti. The dynasty of the Golden Stool rules again, in unbroken matrilineal descent following old Ashanti custom.

G. L. STEER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Othello" at the Old Vic.

Mr. Henry Cass's production of *Othello* has come in for some rather severe criticism from the Sunday bigwigs; and Shakespeare, even more than Mr. Cass, is apparently an offender in the eyes of these critics who have seen too many plays. I hope that theatre-goers will not be put off by their remarks, for this production only just misses being first-rate, and is very well worth a visit. Does Mr. Agate object that Mr. Abraham Sofaer's *Othello* is not handsome enough? The text seems to support Mr. Sofaer. That he gives us, not perhaps a Hebraic, but an Assyrian Moor? And why not? I thought that the part was played impressively, severely and—within its limits—extremely well. There is room surely for an *Othello* who is neither a lion nor a goaded bull, and Mr. Sofaer conveyed an alien nobility with

real intelligence. But the best performance of the evening was undoubtedly Mr. Maurice Evans's Iago—a dashing boon companion, a ladies' man, whose easy success as a swindler is spoilt only by the jealousy of the servant towards his master; he is on a higher rung than the footman in *Miss Julie*, but animated by the same hatred and ambition. Miss Vivienne Bennett as Desdemona was charmingly adequate, if not much more. The rest of the cast, as usual in the present Old Vic company, were excellent.

"Summer's Lease" at the Embassy

There is really no reason why Miss Winifred Howe should not tread the happy path to eminence already explored by Miss Dodie Smith. She has all the makings of a popular dramatist, and, although her first play is for several reasons a bad one, some of the faults may well prove immensely remunerative when she has learnt her job more thoroughly. *Summer's Lease*, after the manner of many unluckier first plays, is about a girl who writes a play and wins fame and fortune. Its setting, however, is a stockbroker's office, and the charm of the piece lies in the gusto and clever observation with which the authoress has sketched its personnel. In this she is wonderfully supported by the cast, most particularly by Miss Joan Hickson, whose really brilliant character-work as a spinsterish senior typist deserves a wider currency. Miss Doris Gilmore gives another beautifully unforced study of Cockney pertness, and Wyndham Goldie as the senior partner, whose brusque bad manners for once do not conceal a heart of gold, plays the ogre with remarkable conviction. The weakness of the piece is in the secretary-playwright's improbable love affair and in the fact that the authoress, not quite realising the kind of play she is writing, allows the piece to tail away realistically instead of treating the mellowed audience to the outburst of fireworks which is undoubtedly its due. Miss Dorice Fordred is inclined to overemphasise Katherine's weariness with city life on Monday morning, at the opening of the play. No leaden-footed drudge could carry such responsibilities. Otherwise her performance is excellent. Mr. Fernald should have curbed the exuberance of Douglas Emery's office boy—this was rank caricature.

"Paganini" at the Whitehall

I went to *Paganini* only to hear Ernest Milton, and I came away reassured that he is the finest character actor on the English stage. His voice, his gestures, are always his own—and always beautiful. And he is especially a master in timing every phrase, movement and silence. Unfortunately, *Paganini* is not a really satisfactory play. The first act promises much. Here are Berlioz, Liszt, Chopin, George Sand and the great, popular violinist Paganini, of whom incredibly mysterious stories were told. But Mr. David Wells seems not to have been sure of how he wanted to tell the tale. Was Paganini really possessed by the devil, or did his manager pose as his familiar spirit for box-office reasons? Did Paganini create and help to spread strange tales because they satisfied his romantic nature, or because the money he thereby earned assured the comfort of a beloved son? If the questions had been put and left unanswered with Pirandello's skill I should have gone away wondering, and delighted by the intricate pattern. But Mr. Wells failed to do more than state a fascinating theme, and to fill up with incidents, no doubt historically true, but not interesting enough to stand by themselves as drama. All the same, the play is worth more than two special matinées.

"The Barretts" Again

Sir Barry Jackson, possibly diagnosing a new public created for the story by Hollywood, has revived *The Barretts of Wimpole-street* at the Piccadilly Theatre, and it is probably rather a pity. The play is an excellent piece of craftsmanship, but there was a feeling that one's own faint weariness with that remarkable family was shared by rather too many of the original cast who have been called upon to resurrect it. Miss Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, for instance, is curiously unaffecting as Elizabeth this time. Her voice falls into a series of cadences which one learns to wait for, and there is a self-consciousness about her technique which was surely not always there. Miss Eileen Beldon retains all her unstudied freshness as the maid, and Mr. Scott Sunderland's Browning is better than one remembered. Miss Joan White kittens very charmingly and shows an acute sense of comedy as Bella, but the other newcomer, Mr. Wilfred Lawson, in the Hardwicke part, has nothing like the range and power needed to give Edward Barrett his proper stature in the piece.

"Strictly Confidential" at the Tivoli

Directed by Frank Capra, the man who made *It Happened One Night* so memorable a picture, *Strictly Confidential* is an example of how good a perfectly matter-of-fact, fast-moving American film can be. Myrna Loy is an exceedingly clever actress, and seldom has she put her talents to better account than in this story of an impetuous young woman who supports, and eventually falls head over heels into love with, her scapegrace brother-in-law. The glimpse of Higginsville and of its royal family, the Higgins, ruled with patriarchal authority by the father of the tribe, is brilliantly done. Two daughters have found eminently satisfactory husbands; but the eldest is married to a man who cares for nothing but horse racing; and it is his adventures that provide the basis of the film. The race-track scenes are remarkably exciting, and the atmosphere of suspense is ingeniously maintained from start to finish.

Marie Rambert's Ballets

Mme. Marie Rambert's three week's season, which opened last Monday at the Duke of York's, affords an opportunity to see in the West End, ballets which have for long drawn audiences of devotees to the Mercury Theatre at Notting Hill. Not since the days of Diaghilev has Fokine's *Carnaval* been satisfactorily presented in every particular. The present production is superior in settings and costumes to the de Basil revival in 1933, but Fokine's technically exacting choreography makes a greater demand on the dancers than they could completely fulfil. Two of the other ballets were designed by Miss Andrée Howard. In *Cinderella*, danced to Weber's music, Miss Howard uses only personages who are essential to the story, and by choreographic and scenic means evolves a ballet which is amusing, fresh and artistically pantomimic. In *Mermaid* she has achieved a happy union of Andersen's fairy tale and Ravel's music. *Les Masques* is the most satisfactory modern ballet with a sophisticated theme. Here Poulenc's music, Frederick Ashton's choreography and Miss Sophie Fedorovitch's settings combine admirably. In his choreography, Mr. Ashton uses modern dance movements and evolves a caricature of jazz which is very expressive of the music. Miss Fedorovitch's settings and designs in black, grey and white are striking and her costumes are superb. Miss Pearl Argyle, who danced the principal parts with ability and exquisite feeling, was supported by a very able company.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, February 1st—
- G. R. Mitchison on "Freedom," Conway Hall, 7.30.
- Huberman, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

SATURDAY, February 2nd—
- Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
- Royal Choral Society, conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent, Albert Hall, 2.30.
- Arthur Rubinstein, Aeolian Hall, 3.15.
- Richard Strauss's setting of "Enoch Arden" for recitation and piano, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.
- Dr. E. Sloan Chesser on "Character in the Making," Friends House, Euston Road, 5.30.

SUNDAY, February 3rd—
- The Bronkhurst Trio, Working Men's College, Crowndale Road, 6.30.
- Gerald Heard on "The Problem of Leisure," Conway Hall, 11.
- Sir Stafford Cripps on "The Beginnings of the Corporate State in Britain," Transport House, 7.45.
- "Days Without End," Grafton Theatre.

MONDAY, February 4th—
- Mrs. E. Dugdale on "The Future of the Jews," Conway Hall, 8.30.

TUESDAY, February 5th—
- Capt. Etienne Bach on "The Knights of Peace," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
- Conference on "The Democratic Principle in Government." Speeches by: A. Barratt Brown and Dr. G. P. Gooch (2–4), Rt. Hon. H. B. Lees Smith and Miss Baker (4.30–6.15), Gerald Heard and Graham Hutton (7.15–9), Queen Mary Hall, Y.W.C.A., Gt. Russell St.
- Dr. G. P. Gooch on "The Outlook in Europe," Kensington Town Hall, 5.30.
- Prof. Laski on "The Prospects of Democratic Government," Lecture Hall, London School of Hygiene, Keppel Street, 6.
- Theodore Besterman on "An Anthropologist Looks at the World," Conway Hall, 7.
- Miss Ruth Fry on "The Quakers," Morley College, 8.

THURSDAY, February 7th—
- Dr. W. L. Robertson on "Religion and the B.B.C.," St. Edmunds, Lombard Street, 1.10.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE chronic desire to be somewhere else—a widespread symptom of interior disquietude—becomes at certain seasons acute. There are two cities and one coast which are almost as familiar to me as this London in which I was born. In April I am obsessed by images of Paris, the smell of *essence*, the zinc counters of the *bistros*, the little restaurant in the Parc Monsouris where the shopkeepers eat their wedding-breakfasts and the trees seem to be posing for the *douanier* Rousseau. June brings a longing for the Riviera, a vulgarised, ribbon-built country, and almost the only part of France which has few ordered buildings and neither stately rivers nor good food, but I happen to have lived for years there, and I love not only the elegiac and almost Tuscan beauty of the country round Grasse, but even Monte Carlo and the faded raffishness of its architecture, like a woman who still sports the ospreys and boas and lace parasols which were the fashion in her youth. And then, at the end of September, there is the summons of Venice. Already the Lido has the melancholy peculiar to watering-places at the season's end, the diamond bracelets and the backgammon-boards have betaken themselves to Cernobbio, but Venice is never so lovely as now, when we move from Florian's to the sunny side of the Piazza; when Torcello is empty except for children and scraggy hens; when for a golden month the lagoon is iridescent with the fabulous colours of the dying dolphin.

* * *

At this moment, the beginning of February, when autumn is forgotten and spring is still out of sight, I wish myself in New York, though this is a city for which I can never imagine myself cherishing a filial or even a familiar affection. It is a place tonic as strychnine or arsenic, and, I suspect, equally poisonous as a regular diet. Until you are acclimatised, it is impossible even to sit still there, so Alpine is the climate—which is why, no doubt, rocking-chairs are so American an institution. We have all been bored by paeans in praise of American architecture: in fact there is not one building in New York which could conceivably be classed with San Vitale or the Paris Ministère de la Marine or Greenwich Hospital. Yet Manhattan remains the most spectacular artifact which the world contains; and after months in New York I still walked through the streets a little Johnny-Head-in-Air, unable to believe my own eyes. There is, by the way, one detail of the New York scene which I have never seen mentioned: you know the striped awnings which in London appear for a few hours at the entrance to St. Margaret's, Westminster, or outside a Mayfair mansion, or at the doors of the Bond Street photographers the night there is a Court—in New York such awnings are permanent above the pavement at the entrance to hundreds of apartment-houses and shops and hotels; and this gives the Londoner an impression of continuous festification, a city given up to Courts and balls and weddings. In fact New York is the most night-lively place, there is always something new and surprising to see. And I would like to be back on Broadway this evening, watching that restless crowd wandering beneath the sky-signs, the real New Yorkers, Levantines with their gaiety gone, a Beirut which is not even quarrelsome.

* * *

As I can't go to New York, I have been sniffing the smell of it which rises from *While Rome Burns* (Barker, 8*s*. 6*d*.). The author, Mr. Alexander Woolcott, is celebrated as a dramatic critic and one of the chief figures on *The New Yorker*; he is himself as specifically New York as Jean Cocteau is Paris. Like all books of collected journalism, this should be read interruptedly, not more than ten pages at a time—you cannot get the measure of a champion sprinter by making him run a Marathon. Mr. Woolcott is, as a journalist, simply stunning. He retells familiar stories, like the guest who vanished from the Paris hotel, and some murder-cases which will be new to most of us in England; and serves them up with a sardonic sauce which is his *spécialité de la maison*. Here is a killing that he was called in on, the victim bearing the typically New York name of Herman Rosenthal:

> I shall always remember the picture of that soft, fat body wilting on the sidewalk with a beer-stained tablecloth serving as its pall. I shall always remember the fish-belly faces of the sibilant crowd which, sprung in a twinkling from nowhere, formed like a clot round those clamorous wounds. Just behind me an old-timer whispered a comment which I have had more than one occasion to repeat. "From where I stand," he said, "I can see eight murderers."

He tells a story as incisively as Sonja Henie cuts threes, as economically as a bee packs honey. When he delivers descriptions of a person, full-face and both profiles, a photomaton could not be snappier. His Frank Harris is a cinch, his Mrs. Patrick Campbell a riot. Perhaps the liveliest thing in the book is his puff of a fellow-journalist, Dorothy Parker. In England she is little known, in America she is already a myth, a goddess to whom all the wisest and dirtiest cracks of the year attribute their birth. It was she who described Katharine Hepburn as running through the whole gamut of the emotions from A to B; it was she who becoming bored with the solitude of her office told the painter to paint on the door the word GENTLEMEN; it was she who when her dog developed a distressing complaint, issued a confidential bulletin: "He *says* he got it from a lamp-post." There are no flies on Mrs. Parker and Mr. Woolcott, and they are not shy about making this clear. Indeed the trouble, if there is one, with these New York wits is that they are so determined not to be taken in by what is bad that they do not easily take in what is good: they are so frightened of flies that they brush away anything which has wings. Mr. Woolcott, it is true, lets himself go about Chaplin and Robeson and the mother of the Marx Brothers, but I am not underrating any of these when I say that they are just the people whom it is *chic* to praise. *Chic*, but not highbrow, oh no, anything rather than that. And here, I fancy, is the heel of this dazzlingly equipped, this chromium-plated Achilles. And it is not specially Mr. Woolcott that I am trying to get at, but the *geist* of sophisticated New York.

* * *

If you compare *The New Yorker* with an English comic paper, you wonder why Americans are so much cleverer than we are. But if you go to New York—and they will give you there the time of your life—you will keep finding yourself hobnobbing in corners with some other European visitor. One reason is that in America conversation is a game played with a different set of rules. It is not tennis, in which you return the other fellow's service, but golf, in which you go on hitting your own ball. It might be defined as a tyranny of anecdote tempered by interruption. The other thing is that even the cleverest Americans are, for all their critical wit, undiscriminating. (Of course such a generalisation is not watertight; Mr. Edmund Wilson, the author of *Axel's Castle* (Scribner, 1931), is one of the best critics alive.) And they are undiscriminating because the past is not alive to them. The sophisticated New Yorker may be crazy about Greco, because Greco is "modern," but otherwise Old Masters are just things which vulgar millionaires buy. The New Yorker may get a helluva kick from Hopkins, but as far as he is concerned Matthew Arnold is as dead as mutton or Milton. Compare Mr. Woolcott with an English equivalent, say Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, and at once the width of the Atlantic becomes apparent. Mr. Woolcott has, of course, read Shakespeare and Ibsen, and that is that. But these writers are a living part of Mr. MacCarthy's mind; and whatever he may be writing about, the best which has been done in that sort will be within his sight. If you have standards, and use them, you are a highbrow, but you don't need to worry about those flies. At the same time, how I wish we had a Mr. Woolcott and a Mrs. Parker here. My complaints against them, against New York, are mostly sour grapes. As I said before, this is the beginning of February.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

NEW SWIFT LETTERS

The Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford. Edited by DAVID NICHOL SMITH. *Oxford University Press.* 15*s.*

This book, which is admirably edited, contains fifty-one letters from Swift to his friend Ford, ten of which were sold to America in 1896, and only one, the last, published in Elrington Ball's edition of the correspondence. The letters run from 1708–1737. Ford was an amiable absentee Irish gentleman with a taste for music, travelling, drink, Latin verses, and the Saint James's coffee-houses, where he spent most of his life. He died unmarried in 1743. He was one of those young people whom Swift liked because he had benefited them, and who remained an intimate friend because of his genial temper, his willingness to act for him with the publishers, his hospitality to Stella, and his political views. Though the least formal of Swift's letters, these are mainly taken up with politics and contain no thunderbolt. The most they supply is evidence of the warmth of Swift's friendship and his amiability, and some information about the composition of *Gulliver's Travels* (" They are admirable things and will wonderfully mend the world "). Swift has not much to say about Ireland. " I cannot think or write in this country " (1714). " I do suppose nobody hates and despises this kingdom more than myself " (1729). Already, in 1709, he is complaining that " I am grown so hard to please that I am offended with every unexpected face I meet where I visit, and the least Tediousness or Impertinence gives me a Shortness of Breath, and a Pain in my Stomack." The year before he observes " that men are never more mistaken than when they reflect upon Past things, and from what they retain in their memory, compare them with the present. . . . So I formerly used to envy my own Happiness when I was a Schoolboy, the delicious Holidays, the Saterday afternoon, and the charming Custards in a blind alley; I never considered the Confinement ten hours a day, to nouns and verbs, the Terror of the Rod, the bloddy Noses, and broken shins."

Except for one or two such sentiments the letters do not further reveal the character of Swift, which, though not likely to become again the bogy of an hysterical Thackeray, remains largely mysterious. For it is obvious that everything which was considered most heartless and cynical in him can be viewed as the attempts of a man with a terrible capacity for suffering to escape it. He was determined to be tough, to face without euphoria the birthdays that brought Stella nearer ugliness and himself nearer the grave, and the disputed " only a woman's hair " is surely an example of the brutality with which a man covers genuine grief; the antithesis, for instance, to the way in which Sterne, a writer who could not be sure of his feelings, would have treated it. The misanthropy of Swift is, in fact, one side of the romantic dichotomy. No one is born a Diogenes, or enters the world complaining of a raw deal. One cannot hate humanity to that extent unless one has believed in it; one must have thought man a little lower than the angels before one can concentrate on the organs of elimination. What is mysterious about Swift is that we know much less of the cause of his disillusion and of what he was like before it than of other romantics and disappointed idealists. We know the effect of Lesbia's infidelity on Catullus, the great war on Céline, the Catholic Church on Joyce, the world on Baudelaire, to take some examples, but we do not know what happened to the charming and lovable young man who wrote the dedication to the *Tale of a Tub*. The shock of exile, and of losing power, terrible though it was, came late in life; he was not jilted or betrayed, nor was his faith of the kind whose loss would create an upheaval. The causes which turned him against mankind, which made him hate its guts, must, therefore, be sought in his ten years at the upper servants' table as a secretary.

There can be nothing more galling for a young man than to find himself part of the scheme of auto-suggestion by which an old one justifies his existence. And when the latter was Sir William Temple, the amateur philosopher, the wise old Polonius in retirement, the M. de Norpois of his age, the pressure must have been intolerable. No philosophy is more suspect than the Epicurean, in spite of its attraction for waning powers. For the doctrine that pleasure is the absence of pain, that happiness can only be found by practising moderation in a garden, is contrary to all we know of the nature of the passions, and, like Christianity, is provocative enough to instil a profound hatred of self-deception in those who have to listen to it constantly preached, and behold it as inconstantly practised. It is interesting to note that Swift wrote his grim " Resolutions when I Come to be Old " at Sir William Temple's, and that he mentions in his obituary of Stella that " she understood the Platonic and Epicurean philosophy and judged very well the defects of the latter." One of the most curious of these is that it is the essayist's creed, favouring mild eccentricities and apologies, the fear of life, and the enumeration of one's possessions. It must have been too close an acquaintance with the style of Sir William Temple (a style essentially false, for it revealed not what he felt but what he would like to feel) that precipitated the prose of Swift into its rightful form, vigorous, mature, lucid, and earthy. One wonders how many times he heard the sage repeat " a good plum is certainly better than an ill peach," and the phrase beginning " when all is done, Human Life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child," which still hoaxes so many as it goes ringing down the anthologies.

But if Swift learnt his horror of the *bêtise*, his hatred of pretensions at Moor Park, he also underwent an emotional disillusionment. It is clear that he warmly admired and liked Temple at first and suffered agony from the slights which that spoilt and peevish mediocrity put upon him. He must finally have felt that he was being deliberately kept down; that Prospero was afraid of Caliban; that the world punished sensibility as unjustly as it repressed intelligence. " Don't you remember," he writes to Stella, " how I used to be in pain when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days and I used to suspect a hundred reasons? I have plucked up my spirit since then; faith, he spoiled a fine gentleman." He told Harley of such treatment, that " it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head."

One thing was needed finally to embitter a man whose youth had been passed in subservience to an inferior in mind and heart, to a Struldbrug, and that was a taste of political power, supreme political power, a drug so potent that it keeps insensitive statesmen sweating and scheming for it till they drop in their tracks, and which, in the slightest quantity, is fatal to the peace of mind of an imaginative writer. It was withdrawn, and the lack of it occasioned " the desiderium which of all things maketh life uneasy." One has only to read a page of the *Journal to Stella* to see in what a state of intoxication the author was at the time, and because of the clumsy boasting, the facetiousness and sentimentality of the messages to Stella, deepening into the frenzied incantations of the little language, it is the most unpleasant, the most morbid of his writings. But even without those moments of triumph the tragedy of Swift would have been that of all those who feel too deeply, and cannot tolerate fools and will not mend their ways. What renders it so terrible is the strength, the ingrowing pride of the victim who took twenty years dying " in a rage like a poisoned rat in a hole." In the works of Joyce, Baudelaire, Céline, the hatred of the breath, stench, and complacency of humanity is accompanied by a certain squeamishness, an impression of neurotic weakness; the sufferers escape into night, into satanism, into silence—even Flaubert, who by the robustness of his mind and his horror of the *bêtise* most resembles Swift (how close *Polite Conversation* and *Directions to Servants* are to *Bouvard and Pécuchet*), is able to fall back on the religion of art for art's sake. But in Swift the fierce indignation never rises into a scream nor is mitigated by any consolation. In the loneliness which so frightened Thackeray he continued to the end, punishing and taking punishment.

CYRIL CONNOLLY

ARGUMENT IN MIDSTREAM

Return to Philosophy. By C. E. M. JOAD. *Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Many people of sensitive mind, small faith, and no executive capacity find themselves now in a position which has been the common lot of philosophers in all ages, without however having the consolation of a philosophy. " Who is mad, the world or I? " they ask as they set themselves against the stream. " Shall I struggle to keep my feet, shall I face about and gain the floating blessedness of the majority, or shall I perhaps scramble out on to the bank and watch the flotilla swirl by on its way to the rapids? " The last is a difficult feat, for a bank of any sort and the muscles to get one there are the particular possession of a philosopher. People in this predicament will learn a lot by watching Mr. Joad at work in his latest book. In previous ones he has defined his particular bank, and the view it affords him, in some detail. At the end of this one, in three noble chapters, he demonstrates that his bank is solid enough to support at least himself, and in the end he hops out neatly and lets the world go by. But for the

most part he is in mid-stream arguing ferociously with several eminent persons whom he is astonished to find barging fatuously by him in the wrong direction. This is a helpful and exhilarating book, because it exhibits philosophy in action. The gist of Mr. Joad's dualism is elegantly expounded, but with it we get many mundane glimpses of Mr. Joad: his pipes, his bathing habits, his two suits, his holidays, his hatred of advertisements, dynamos, speed merchants, aeroplanes, and crooners. "Return to Philosophy" is in the imperative mood. Indeed, it is an inference from Mr. Joad's evolutionary doctrine that we are all on the way to become philosophers if only we do not destroy ourselves during the process. Thus it is good to be reminded that philosophers are men.

Mr. Joad's adventures as a defender of reason and value are very peculiar. As a professional philosopher he is courted by retired eminent men of affairs who invite him to dinner and hand him metaphysical manuscripts which cause him considerable embarrassment as a guest, because he finds them as meaningless as Mrs. Eddy's bible. He returns sadly to his lecture room and finds his pupils chanting either with Mr. Aldous Huxley, "Let us be intelligent, but let us always remember that truth is undiscoverable, reason a slave of the instincts and beauty only what we happen to like"; or, with D. H. Lawrence, "Away from the head, down to the fertile blood stream, to the dark comfort of the guts and the genitals." He retreats to Chartres Cathedral and finds on the other side of the valley a muddle of hoardings and hangars from which aeroplanes fly up and engage in a bombing demonstration over the Cathedral. He notes the nature of the good time which is had by the few who can afford it, and of the bad which is had by everyone else. He stops his ears to mechanised music, his eyes to primitive art, and his intelligence to the blaring complacence of the low-brow. These painful phenomena, he perceives, are but diverse consequences of the dethronement of reason as a guide to reality, and the denial of the objective existence of truth, beauty and goodness in the material universe.

It is amusing to find Mr. Joad selecting Mr. Huxley as the arch enemy of philosophy, because, although Mr. Huxley's influence on young intellectuals is undoubtedly very great, he is in many respects a man after Mr. Joad's own heart. His outlook is saturated with the values which Mr. Joad approves; they are equally sickened by the worship of creation-saving amusements and labour-saving devices; and the elegant malice of Mr. Joad's sketches of the contemporary scene are very much in Mr. Huxley's vein. Nevertheless, in some recent essays Mr. Huxley has proclaimed that a philosophy is a state of mind, not a guide to the universe, and that reason is a donkey with a mob of desires at its heels and a carrot of curiosity at its nose. He has said, "No psychological experience is 'truer,' so far as we are concerned, than any other. . . . Science is no 'truer' than common sense or lunacy, than art or religion." And again, "A similar conjuring trick . . . draws the Good and the Beautiful out of the seething hotch-potch of diverse human tastes and sensibilities and interests, deduces Justice from our actual inequalities and absolute Truth from the necessary . . . relativities of daily life." And again, "God for our human purposes is simply life." Taking these as his texts, Mr. Joad has a first-class row with Mr. Huxley on the nature of the three dowagers of philosophy—truth, beauty and goodness. The quarrel is most sharply defined in an illustration which Mr. Joad uses. If five people are asked what is the temperature of a room the answers will probably be all different and all wrong; but the room has a temperature, and the thermometer gives it. Here in the domain of science the two men agree. A ship's stoker will underestimate the temperature, a refrigerator worker will overestimate it, but each may arrive at the truth by the reasonable process of reading the thermometer. But substitute for room temperature the beauty of a work of art, the goodness of a man or the value of a system of ethics, and what happens? Can the stoker and the refrigerator worker reconcile their differences by any possible use of their minds? Mr. Joad constructs the analogue of a temperature and a thermometer; Mr. Huxley returns a definite negative. Mr. Huxley's No looks rather silly when Mr. Joad has finished with him. The dispute, however, is between an amateur and a professional. The professional has chosen his ground and attacked brilliantly. The next move is with the amateur, who is also capable of brilliance.

After these mental fisticuffs Mr. Joad makes a profound summary of his philosophical position. Its characteristic feature is its doctrine of apprehension of value through jumps in awareness. He postulates on the one hand a mind capable of several levels of

Non-Professional Journalism

By EDWARD ANTON

TO a much greater extent than formerly, the world of journalism may be divided into two spheres: that of the staff, or strictly professional, journalists, and that of "free-lance" (unattached) contributors to the Press.

It is with the latter than I am here concerned. Writing for the Press—whether fiction or articles—has become something more than a pleasing hobby for a number of people with spare time on their hands. It has become a definitely dependable source of additional income, of which most people are very glad to-day.

"Free-lance" journalism presents a really wide and attractive field for those who have some aptitude for writing and have acquired a sufficient knowledge of Press *technique* to be able to present their ideas, themes, or plots in printable form.

Many fantastic stories of "fortunes" earned by the pen have been broadcast, resulting in disappointment and loss to many would-be writers who have no qualification for writing. That, however, does not detract from the fact that, given a natural aptitude for writing, and a willingness to undergo a short period of practical instruction by an experienced and competent teacher, a very useful spare-time income can be made by contributing to the columns of some of the 4,000 journals and magazines which are published in the British Isles, nearly all of which depend to an extent upon "free-lance" contributors to fill their pages.

The London School of Journalism has done eminently useful and successful work in training (by correspondence) those who are desirous of earning by the pen. It is a properly organised and authentic school of journalistic instruction which has produced many "star" writers of to-day—writers whose work appears in all the leading journals and newspapers of the Empire. Many contributions to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION are from such sources, and periodicals of the high standing of *Blackwood*, the *Fortnightly*, and *Nineteenth Century*, as well as all the principal dailies and weeklies, regularly publish contributions by those who have benefited by an L.S.J. training. Quite a number of them, in fact, discovering a special liking for Press work, have secured important staff positions on the chief London dailies.

There are doubtless many NEW STATESMAN AND NATION readers who are conscious of a desire to write (and possibly conscious, too, of a latent literary ability), but who have not hitherto essayed anything either in journalism or fiction.

To such, I recommend a plan which has proved serviceable in many other instances and which, incidentally, costs nothing. It is that any reader desirous of ascertaining, in the first place, whether he has sufficient natural ability to justify hopes of success after a short period of training should send a brief MS. (story, essay, or article) to the School. Upon this, Sir Max Pemberton (the Director of Studies) will base an opinion of the writer's possibilities and will advise accordingly.

It is really a very simple and practical way of discovering whether one is likely to develop literary success, and, as I say, it involves the enquirer in no expense and places him under no obligation. At the same time, it gives him the advantage of possessing an opinion from one who is admittedly among the most brilliant journalists of the century and who has been instrumental in piloting many a beginner to a success which, but for the assistance received from the School, might never have been attainable.

Full particulars of the Schools courses and records of the success of its students in all parts of the world may be obtained post free on application to

Inquiry Bureau,

The London School of Journalism

57, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.

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awareness, and on the other a universe in which several levels of reality are embodied in matter. A child learns to integrate sense data into physical objects. Then, by a jump in awareness, there is an apprehension of relations between physical objects, these relations being Mr. Joad's "objects of thought." This is where at our present evolutionary stage most minds stop. But a few, the artists and the mystics, are capable of making a further jump into awareness of relations between objects of thought, and the result of this integration is an object of value.

> In what respect do they differ from the rest of us? Primarily in respect of their vision, a vision which is at once more subtle and more penetrating. Common phraseology is near the mark when it speaks of the artist as one who is able to *see* more in a given situation than his fellows. The "more" which he sees is the significant form which lies hid in common objects; he discerns, that is to say, within the material medium which overlays and obscures them, certain combinations of forms which I suggest derive their significance from the fact that by some means or other they introduce us to this new class of objects which I am proposing to call objects of value. To revert to common language, the artist detects the manifestation of beauty in what the ordinary man sees only as an object of everyday use. So long as this vision lasts the artist remains rapt in contemplation, thrilled to ecstasy by the image of this new order of being which is vouchsafed to him. But the vision does not last. . . . Thus the work of art is a witness not so much to the artist's vision as to his failure to retain it. . . .

On this hypothesis, the process of Mr. Joad's dualism is the gradual emancipation of mind from matter. A striking commentary on the machine age follows. We proliferate our gadgets not because we like them, but because by the turning of switches our descendants will be free to devote themselves to the now infrequent business of the mystic, the artist, and the philosopher. Mr. Joad realises the danger of our present preoccupation with gadgets: but if we survive it he projects a brave new world of his own.

BARRINGTON GATES

NEW NOVELS

The Mills of God. By ERNST LOTHAR. Translated by WILLA and EDWIN MUIR. *Secker.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Strangers. By N. BRYSSON MORRISON. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Down by the Salley Gardens. By BARBARA NOBLE. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Witch of Brent. By FRANCES CARMICHAEL. *Bles.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The personality of the writer, whether suppressed, expressed or exploited, plays an important part in every novel. Style is its vehicle. In life one's judgment of a person, so often hastily founded on his personality, may be modified by acquiring knowledge of his character, intellect and attainments. There is an analogous process in reading a novel: one may be instantly attracted by a style, only to find that its owner suffers from a poverty of ideas. But since personality and style are largely determined by the inward man—by character—their influence on one's judgment is not only inevitable but legitimate.

Ernst Lothar, author of *Little Friend* and now of *The Mills of God*, has an insistent personality. Voluble and knowing, he winks, grimaces, takes you confidentially by the elbow and whispers at the top of his voice. His manner is that of a showman with performing seals of whom he is very fond. He does not identify himself with his chief characters, yet his method is not objective. There is little actual dialogue, but the narrative is frequently concerned with the thoughts and emotions of his persons, and is spattered with the clichés and circumlocutions which *they* would have employed in telling it, these single words and phrases being enclosed in inverted commas, for fear we should mistake them for Herr Lothar's own. Thus the author comes between his persons and the reader, not overtly with comments, but seeming by his tone of voice, underlined colloquialisms, and self-conscious emphasis, to say: "Isn't my little man pompous? Do you notice the implied pathos? Lord, what fools these mortals be, and yet how noble!" So that reading *The Mills of God* is like watching a play beside an acquaintance who digs you in the ribs when a point is made, and insists on exchanging a delighted side-glance over every joke. There are people who find this method stimulating, and they will like the book enormously. It is full of vitality. Those who find it tiring may read it for its interesting story.

Haushofer, notorious for his severity as Judge, is in private life kind, weak and careful. His beloved wife is dying of cancer, and she extracts from him a vow to dispatch her when the disease reaches a certain stage. He intends to commit suicide immediately after, but, under the stress of emotion, having administered an overdose of veronal to her, he takes an insufficient dose himself. He is tried for murder and acquitted. The trial is reported in great detail, and in the course of it Haushofer undergoes a conversion from his rigid view that the law is synonymous with justice and that the accused is usually guilty. Thus he leaves the court, Herr Lothar would say, "a better man."

A work of art, whether its theme be painful or not, demands a deep sincerity in the creator. I do not think that Herr Lothar would set up to be an artist, but only a purveyor of absorbing entertainment. But, as I have already indicated, his method will, for many, interfere with the entertainment; and where the theme of the change of heart becomes manifest in the plot, the air of flashy showmanship, the ring of false bonhomie, becomes almost shockingly inappropriate. The scenes too easily transform themselves into moving photographs before our eyes, the emotions and thoughts fit too easily into facile captions. Even in entertainment, there must be some degree of sincerity as well as talent: the personality must be unwittingly expressed, not exploited, however brilliantly.

After the dazzle and din of the circus, the solitude of a Scotch island; this is the setting of the main part of *The Strangers*. The personality of Miss Brysson Morrison is neither insistent nor negligible. She uses her persons as symbols, almost as pawns or puppets, placing them in quietly dramatic situations against the sound of wind and surf, the darkness of old ruins, the wisdom, part superstition, of a remote peasantry. Bernard Monti, a young, determined, sensitive refugee from Fascism, carries off his nearest, dearest sister, to the isle of Moluag, where he buys the sole hotel. Our interest in Monti is fully aroused, only to die down when the girl Willis takes the centre of the landscape. Already acquainted with the Montis, she goes as governess to the one big house on Moluag and we watch her, dimly, as through a veil of rain, embarking on a love-affair with her employer, Kuld. Jealous, Lady Kuld dismisses her; in order to bide her time, she marries Monti (whose love for her takes the reader completely by surprise) and, when the opportunity arises, is unfaithful to him with her lover. Tragedy ensues. We do not feel it deeply, because, except for Monti at the beginning, the characters have no vivid existence. The author's avoidance of any indication that Monti is in love with Willis—the distance at which the reader is kept by a withholding of relevant information—is obviously quite deliberate and part of an aesthetic plan; but it is a plan which requires a certain magnitude in the figures portrayed. When it is a Heathcliff by whom we are baffled, we accept it as inevitable and are not irked: it is like being baffled by a symbol whose total significance lies in our unconsciousness. But to be baffled by the small is irksome. What makes *The Strangers* a book worth reading is the way in which without labour, almost without description, the atmosphere of the island, the streams, the solitude, even the quality of the air, is conveyed. This says a great deal for the lucid, unemphatic style, although there are two or three very odd misuses of language, e.g., the substitution of "assimilated" for "simulated" on p. 119.

There is a run in governess heroines. Last month there was *A Shepherdess of Sheep*, and now there are Willis of *The Strangers* and Mrs. Holden of *Down by the Salley Gardens*. Like Willis, Mrs. Holden is in her first place, but not because she is very young; she is a beautiful and sympathetic woman in the late thirties who has just divorced her husband. Her charge, Pamela, crippled as a result of infantile paralysis, and so a "difficult" girl, is very competently sketched. The entire book is concerned with the love of Pamela's elder brother Adrian for Mrs. Holden, who responds only with liking, but who finally, owing to gossip and disapproval, has to leave. Miss Noble does not succeed in putting quite enough weight of interest and emotion into this situation to carry a full-length novel; she is a pleasant chronicler rather than an artist. *Down by the Salley Gardens* is for those who like quiet, uneventful stories which they feel they might have written themselves if they had more time. As witnessed by the use of the outmoded dots, it belongs to a slightly old-fashioned, "sensitive" kind, without glitter or pretensions.

The Witch of Brent, an elegantly produced little volume, is oddly mild considering the grimness of its subject—witch-hunting in a seventeenth-century village. Its inconsecutive manner indicates the writer's want of control over her subject-matter, and this is confirmed by the unconvincing dialogue, where thous and

yous are mingled in a way which history may sanction, but which here has an amateurish ring. But at least the method is low-toned and quiet, without any swashbuckling. One feels that Miss Carmichael could have made much more of her theme had she lived herself into it with sharper application; then fancy might have made a better showing in the absence of imagination. How, for instance, could she remain so ill-acquainted with her chosen characters as to make the portrait of Dr. Gilmour's mother have "a strange old face" on one page and a "young face" a few pages farther on? E. B. C. JONES

ORPHISM

Orpheus and Greek Religion. A Study of the Orphic Movement. By W. K. C. GUTHRIE. *Methuen.* 21s.

It is now a matter of common knowledge that during the centuries immediately preceding and succeeding the beginning of the Christian era ecstatic cults with a secret ritual grew up in the Graeco-Roman world centring in such divine personages as Dionysos, Orpheus, Demeter, Attis and Mithras. The central feature of these sacred dramas was the representation of the death and resurrection of the hero-god re-enacted in order to secure for the initiates a blessed hereafter. To this end the novice underwent a mystic rebirth through a long and complicated ceremonial which in its inception was crude and primitive. Thus, in the Thraco-Phrygian worship of Dionysos, which became established in Greece as a public cult by the sixth century B.C., the devouring of the raw flesh of bulls and calves by frenzied votaries seems to have formed an integral part of the ritual. It was this orgiastic religion that Orphism stripped of its excesses, and gave a new significance as a mystical way of union with the Unseen; a method of freeing the soul from a circle of births or becomings by spiritual rebirth and regeneration to a higher life beyond the grave.

Now it is undoubtedly true as Mr. Guthrie says, that everyone has heard of Orphism and its hero, Orpheus, but even those who gained more than a passing acquaintance with the classics at school in all probability left the sixth form with an unsatisfied curiosity concerning the cryptic term "Orphic" which so frequently occurs with little or no explanation in commentaries on Plato, Pindar or Virgil. Writing in the first instance for this class of reader, the author of the volume before us has made it his aim to discover what Orphism means and how long it lasted. Without entering into the anthropological aspect of the problem, or discussing questions of comparative religion, he follows the records of the movement in the literary and other remains of classical and post-classical Greece, and estimates its influence over the life and thought of the people. By concentrating, however, on the actual mystery cult he has succeeded in achieving not only his primary object, but he has also supplied scholars whose interests are mainly in origins and comparisons with valuable material for their researches in a wider field.

Orpheus, he thinks, was a Thracian hero closely associated at first with the god Apollo with whom he shared the power of making music with magical properties, jealousy for his rights, and certain Dionysian affinities. But the relationship with Dionysos was a later syncretism when he became the expounder of a sacramental religion and of the fate of the soul after death. In the beginning, it is contended, he belonged to the "sunny, open-air religion of the Hellenes, a priest of Apollo bearing in himself many of the attributes of the god he served." In course of time, however, certain chthonian Dionysian sects adopted Orpheus as high priest and mediator, very much as the Early Church took over pagan festivals, and even transformed Dionysos into St. Dionysius. By making the calm and civilised Orpheus into the prophet of the Thracian god, the earlier orgy was purified and exalted, and in place of the crude and savage form of communion known as *omophagia*, the later Orphic mysticism endeavoured to remove the Titanic, or evil element in mankind, by ecstatic rites and by moral purity during the soul's transmigration in a series of bodies.

Since there was a mystical element in Orpheus before his association with Dionysian worship, it only required the chthonian influence to bring it into greater prominence, and from the time of Herodotus we know that the Orphic religion was Bacchic. The god of the cult was essentially Dionysos, Orpheus being the hero and founder, though he became so intimately related to the

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divinity that in his legend he was killed by being torn in pieces just as Dionysos was said to have been mutilated by the Titans. But, if the Aeschylus version is correct, his death took the form of a ritual act so that Orpheus becomes the god who is dismembered and devoured in a savage sacramental communion. On this hypothesis, Orpheus would be an ancient death and resurrection deity comparable to Dionysos, Tammuz or Osiris. The problem, therefore, is a very complicated one, but in the religion we call Orphic the main preoccupation was the attainment of immortality by the eradication of the impurity (i.e., the Titanic nature) which prevented perfect union with the divine. In this process of purification asceticism played an important part, and a cycle of births and deaths was necessary to complete the purgation. Free will and personal responsibility were emphasised in the Orphic code, and punishment after death awaited the uninitiated and the impure.

This creed was so foreign to the Greek theological outlook that it was not likely to make numerous converts like the Eleusinian mysteries. As Mr. Guthrie says, " it was a cry in the wilderness, because it was a Gospel for which the age was not yet ready." But it was not without its influence in preparing the way for Christianity, and the personality of Orpheus unquestionably made an impression on the Early Church. The closing pages of this volume, which are devoted to a consideration of this problem, are all too short, but they indicate the proper approach to the relations of Orphism to Christianity. The resemblances are pointed out, but " if there is borrowing by Christianity," it is rightly maintained, " it is from the general religious atmosphere of the age, not from the Orphics."

This is a book which merits a place in the publisher's excellent series of " Handbooks of Archaeology," and if experts may feel that some of the author's positions require further elucidation, they will recognise the service he has rendered to archaeology and classical scholarship in this study of the Orphic movement. The illustrations, notes and bibliographical index add to the value of the work.

E. O. JAMES

THE STORIES OF HERODOTUS

The Art of the Logos. By J. A. K. THOMSON. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

The ingenuous reader will be surprised, and I hope relieved, to find that *The Art of the Logos* is about Herodotus. " Logos," says Mr. Thomson, " did not originally mean ' word ' or ' reason,' or anything but merely ' what is said.' " How nice ! But it seems a pity to have chosen so mystical-sounding a title for so human and pleasant a little book.

Mr. Thomson's subject is, more strictly, the Greek " traditional story " as crystallised in Herodotus, and the art, so far as we can guess it, of that earlier Story which was told, not written. He divides the Logos roughly into history, fable, myth, etc., illustrating each—and every other point—by a story or stories from Herodotus : this anthology-aspect is the life and soul of the volume. But how can we make the connection between these tales and the earlier " art-form "—earlier than literature ? " The normal or characteristic function of the ancient Story Teller was not to invent. It was to repeat. No bald or literal repetition ; something more was expected than that. What more ? " Precisely : it is a " puzzling question," and I do not think Mr. Thomson really answers it. We can see that the Logos, while it remained oral, must have been a " growing thing," but not quite how it can have grown.

Mr. Thomson is shy about the question of belief in these stories, now seeming to imply that they *were* believed, now gliding off into the irrelevance of such a question. Again, the strong impression is that many, at least, were quite definitely believed. Why not ? The supernatural, when it occurred, would be no obstacle. " One may say that a miraculous explanation of a notable event seemed to such audiences more probable than a non-miraculous." And then " it is a marked characteristic of the Greek popular tale —the more interesting because it is not characteristic of the *conte populaire* in general—that it eschews anonymity. It does not like to say ' A certain king,' it likes to say ' Croesus ' or ' Cyrus.' " This curious fact seems all on the side of literal belief. And if it is true, as he says, that popular audiences believe what they like, it is no less true that they like, as a rule, only what they can believe —the next step, indeed, is to like what one thinks *might* be literally true. This bias of the mind may partly explain why, as Mr. Thomson points out, all popular audiences except that of to-day have had rather a preference for tragic stories—he cites the old ballads and the *chansons de geste*. The fact is, a modern popular audience can apparently believe anything—in the human field ; it can believe " as many as six impossible things before breakfast." But outside that field, " popular science " makes it sceptical. The Greek, superior at least in that, reversed the terms.

Mr. Thomson's inquiry into the " truth," or basis, of particular stories is most fascinating, and no one will quarrel with his praise of Herodotus's art. But it is less congenial to find him dismissing as superfluous everything in modern literature which goes beyond that art.

K. JOHN

A DARING YOUNG MAN

The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze. By WILLIAM SAROYAN. *Faber and Faber.* 7s. 6d.

The author of this volume of short stories, with its splendid title, is an Armenian. Anyone who has looked into the stunned eyes of Armenian children knows that their blood and fibre remember the torments of that persecuted people. They are inarticulate, not from poverty of emotion, but from its complexity. But Mr. Saroyan is not only an Armenian, he is an American. He grew up among the vineyards of California, and passed much of his later youth in the back streets of San Francisco. He starved and was sometimes homeless, suffered bitterly from cold, and stared with sombre, pitiful eyes at such lives as touched his, tramps, wastrels, splendid boys doomed to destruction ; and with sardonic and bitter eyes at the rich. He wanted to write, preferably short stories. He did write and the editors regretted and regretted and regretted, so Mr. Saroyan continued to starve and continued to write. The Editor of a small paper accepted a story—without pay. So Mr. Saroyan wrote him thirty or so more, most of which the Editor published and brought, as well, to the notice of Mr. O'Brien, who included some among the best stories of the year. American editors and publishers do not care much for criticism of the American and his ways, but success is a different matter. Mr. Saroyan's stories were collected, and ran into three editions. And now there is this remarkable book, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*. Mr. Saroyan is an artist, and a rebel. " Do you know," he says, " that I really do not believe that there is such a thing as a poem-form, a story-form, or a novel-form ? I believe there is man only." After such a thesis as that, it is not surprising to find that this book, from its startling—and so apt—silver-foil jacket to the last word of its passionate script, speaks with a new voice.

Mr. Saroyan's Act of Rebellion reads concisely :

> I am not using great material for a short story. Nothing is going to happen in this work. I am not fabricating a fancy plot. I am not creating memorable characters. I am not using a slick style of writing. I am not building up a fine atmosphere. I am out here in the Far West, in San Francisco, in a small room on Carl Street, writing a letter to common people, telling them in simple language things they already know.

That should make a pleasant variant for those neat brochures, " How to Write Stories though Human," designed for the youthful literary aspirant, and which begin : " Make a close study of the magazine to which you hope to contribute," and end with an outline of the thirty-nine plots upon which all fiction is based.

> Why don't I make up plots (he goes on) and write beautiful love stories that can be made into motion pictures ? Why don't I try to please the American reading public ?
>
> Well, I am an Armenian. Michael Arlen is an Armenian, too. He is pleasing the public. I have a great admiration for him, and I think he has perfected a very fine style of writing and all that, but I don't want to write about the people he likes to write about. Those people were dead to begin with. You take Iowa and the Japanese boy and Theodore Badal, the Assyrian, they are of the stuff that is eternal in man. You don't find them in bright places, making witty remarks about sex, and trivial remarks about art. You find them where I found them and they will be there for ever, the race of man.

In short, says this " daring young man," let the dead bury their dead, I want to write and *am writing* " great prose." I do not want " to sell this story, or any story to . . . " and, with a riotous contempt for the laws of libel, he names periodicals, publishers, and authors whom he considers among those already defunct.

So this waif of two strange peoples hurls himself from point to pinnacle across all the life he can find, writing stories, stories, stories, all good, all heart-breaking. But what will the English, with their souls in fig-leaves, make of him ? They will hate Mr. Saroyan's stories quite probably, but that they will read them

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and reread them there is little doubt. He barges at life, plucks it out in chunks, stares confounded—a Frankenstein monster. There is an accusation that we are missing the point by seeing events through their traditional context, and that when we have gazed upon life through our present concepts of language we have seen nothing at all.

> The greatest prose has never been written. It is hardly even in language. . . . I do not believe in races. I do not believe in governments. I see life as one life at one time, so many millions simultaneously, all over the earth. Babies who have not yet been taught to speak any language are the only race of the earth, the race of man; all the rest is pretence, what we call civilisation, hatred, fear, desire for strength. We grow up and we learn a language and we see the universe through the language we know . . . we isolate ourselves in the language we know. . . . I want to speak a more universal language. The heart of man, the unwritten part of man, that which is eternal and common to all races.

FRANCES GREGG-WILKINSON

THE HOLY EMPEROR

The Emperor Charles IV. By BEDE JARRETT. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The sobriety of the Emperor Charles IV offered a sharp contrast to the eccentric cavalcading of his father. King John of Bohemia represented in his person the typical knight of the age of chivalry. He pranced over Europe with a drawn sword eager to blood it in any scrap that was going. For the greater part of his life he was engaged in France against the English, finding the career of arms much more to his taste than the government of his country. He left this, with some reservations, to his son, who made it an admirable preliminary study to the more difficult task that lay ahead of him. Eventually King John, completely blind, but game to the last, was led into battle at Crecy, and slaughtered; and Charles found himself no longer under the necessity of raising taxes to spend on his father's escapades.

Charles is known to history as the Priest's Emperor, but the implication is not so derogatory as it sounds. Father Jarrett amply proves his case that the emperor was in league with the Papacy rather than subservient to it:

> Whenever he came in contact with it (i.e., Papal policy) he furthered it; and he was supported by it to the end of his reign. But, then, he was above all a realist. He saw no need for antagonising priests or popes: they held power in his day. Moreover, the framework of life was Catholic. And since the needs of political life then, as ever, included stability and unity, these were more likely to be achieved by securing the support of the Church than by quarrelling with it.

Charles was a realist, not an idealist; and in this he foreshadowed the tendencies of the Renaissance—being most certainly of his time if not in advance of it. He turned back, realistically, to the original conception of an alliance between pope and emperor, the spiritual and lay heads of Christendom, as a working plan for the preservation of Western Europe against the menance of Turkish and Moorish invasion. Moreover, in his eyes, the Holy Roman Empire had a secondary but no less important function to fulfil.

The imperial was an elective office; any prince was eligible. This clearly implied that the emperor represented a unifying force in Christendom; and his temporal authority was made more absolute by coronation at the hands of the Pope. By virtue of his office the emperor stood above all other princes; and disputes or difficulties were, in theory, to be brought to him to solve. Before the age of nationalism the Empire was the strongest confederation in Europe—again in theory only. In practice it was very different. The electors invariably made it their policy to elect the weakest monarch so that their private ambitions might in no way be interfered with. Charles, however, always closely allied to the Papacy, and with the efficient State of Bohemia at his back, was able for a time to realise the conception of the Holy Roman Empire; and to foreshadow, however indistinctly, something comparable to the present League of Nations.

The main ingredients in Charles's character were sobriety, common sense and shrewdness, Father Jarrett writes:

> Temperate in his habits, hating impure stories, chaste in his life, interested in the theory of spiritual development and its progressive stages, he emerges from the background of his court as a genial, happy-hearted man, a leader who by nature was an optimist, hopeful, "bringing almost impossible things to a good ending," said Archbishop John of Prague; one of those who have the patience, perseverence and self-confidence to carry through what other folk said could not possibly be done.

This is a perspicacious study of the character and policy of a great mediaeval prince.

RICHARD STRACHEY

A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

South to Cadiz. By H. M. TOMLINSON. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

By "Sentimental Journey" I do not mean a tour full of slop and love-making like one of Pierre Loti's amorous adventures with women of various colours. I mean what Sterne meant: a journey suggesting personal thoughts and reflections. That is usually Mr. Tomlinson's manner of travelling, and he has travelled a great deal—up the Amazons, all about the Malays, and goodness knows where. As to the present book, I will give only one warning. If anyone wants a guide-book for Spain, let him not take this as a substitute for a Baedeker. No names of hotels are given, no list of prices, no plans of roads or railways, no starred places to be seen at all costs. I am reminded of a saying of Mr. Tomlinson's when a British Consul told him he must be sure to see a certain Buddhist temple on a mountain above Singapore because it was unique. "So am I unique," remarked the traveller in refusal.

He was quite right; "unique" is the right word for him. With two or three companions, in a ramshackle motor-bus, he runs about southern Spain, sees things that other people do not see, and makes observations that have no particular reference to what he sees. Spain is exactly the country for that kind of traveller. It has the charm of historic romance, and the misfortune of attempted modernity, all mixed up. In the hotels of the big cities one could sadly imagine oneself in any other European capital, but romance lingers in the touch of Moorish in the folk-music, the ancient politeness of all the people, and the dances of a man and a woman courting upon a square table set among the cypresses of an open-air café. I admit that I have seen the country only in times of war and rather violent revolution, accompanied by the burning of Church properties. But to me the whole land was pervaded by "the light of other days"—the gentle melancholy of a banquet-hall deserted. It has a past, even a lurid past, but it is hard to speak with certainty about its present.

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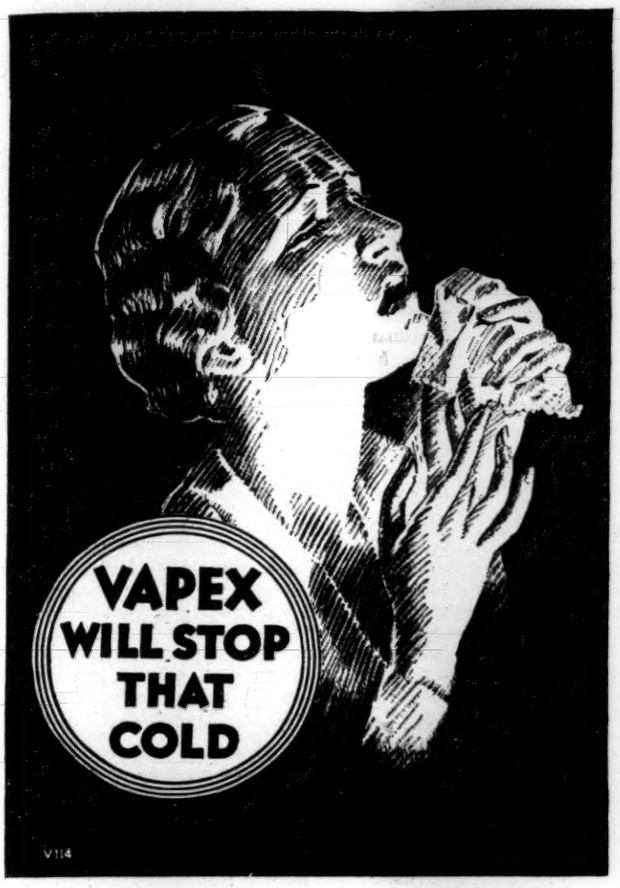

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The Treaty of Versailles and After

By SIR NORMAN ANGELL, LORD RIDDELL, C. K. WEBSTER, and Others. 5s. A straightforward account of the circumstances in which the terms of the Treaty were negotiated, the personalities involved, the terms agreed upon and how the agreements have fared since they were made.

Adventures of the Human Mind

The Search for Truth

By ERIC T. BELL. 7s. 6d. A lively and most entertainingly written book on the history of science. The author writes from a purely materialistic point of view, and can be read as an antidote to Jeans and Eddington.

Books for the Humane

The Indian Earthquake

By C. F. ANDREWS. 2s. 6d. A vivid account of the disaster which struck North Bihar last year. The author makes a powerful plea for the whole world to come forward with assistance for the distressed area.

The Tragedy of the Assyrians

By LIEUT.-COLONEL R. S. STAFFORD, D.S.O. *With Maps.* 8s. 6d. "This book is the most authoritative yet on the massacres of 1933. . . . Col. Stafford has recorded the tragic events very evenly." *Daily Telegraph*

As Mr. Tomlinson says, it is quite possible to go through Spain without hearing a word of a revolution that is raging. I found hardly anyone knew of the war with America, and most people were rather surprised when I asked about it. Events pass over Spain like the winds over the mountains. The author writes:

> Spain may yet prove to be the most fortunate country of Europe. Outside the large cities, and nearly all Spain is outside them, the land suggests that nothing has happened to it, despite Arabs, Napoleon, the fanaticism of dynasts, and Christians of a faith so burning that their pious deeds turned hell into a place of rest for their victims, except corn, olives, and vines; and it promises that it can so continue in perpetuity.

Or again:

> This high plateau outside Madrid was still under sun and corn; it looked well and brown. Singularly, it keeps its health with the means which may be seen figured on the monuments of old Egypt. The level corn, the autobus, and the raw earth, flowed on for hours. Sometimes we passed men and women riding mules, but they gave no more sign than their indifferent beasts that they saw us.

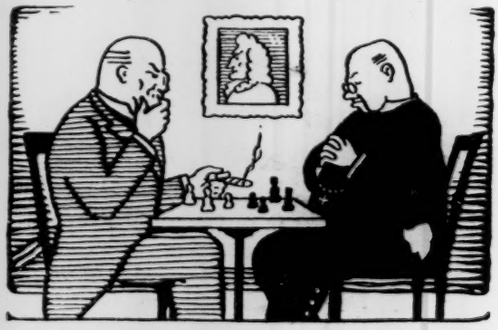
I have walked all the miles over that sun-baked plateau from Madrid to Toledo, and it was always just the same. But though it seemed incredible, one did arrive at Toledo in the end, and to Toledo Mr. Tomlinson justly gives a full amount of attention, for that is the true city of all that is meant by Spain. He notices the tradition that Cervantes and El Greco conversed there, and what city in the world could record a greater glory? Toledo is above all the city of El Greco. He painted a picture of it that used to be in the great Gallery of New York. It remained fixed in my memory, but when I searched for it there rather lately it was gone—gone, I was told to some Spanish gallery or Embassy. And then, only two weeks ago, it was reproduced in the *Times* as one of the pictures in Boston. That may have been another view, but it was El Greco's Toledo, and it is curious that, whereas Cervantes was recognised almost at once as an immortal, El Greco had to wait four centuries before his claim was noticed, and those saints of his with faces white as shrouds and long as coffins reached immortality.

A learned Spaniard once told me that Don Quixote had done great harm to the Spanish spirit because every young man who had a noble or generous thought was at once mocked at as Quixotic, and Mr. Tomlinson gives instances of this assumed cynicism and indifference. But, in speaking of that melancholy and irresistible country, I am wandering into reflections like the author himself who, after mentioning a few details of the Escorial in mockery, wanders off into a dissertation upon novels. Let me give one more instance of his characteristic method. After descanting upon the certain horrors of the "next war," he continues:

> Brains have turned to blow-flies if, in the common routine of the home, we must see we get our anti-vesicant and chloride of lime with the bread and butter, and beside the infant's cot at night leave with our blessing and the doll the babe's dear little gas-mask. The Magi never thought of that gift.

So the author is a born wanderer, an original and fascinating wanderer, but in the last chapter he whisks us off to Concord, Walden Pool, and Thoreau. I love Thoreau anywhere this side of idolatry, but I never connected him and his beautiful Walden Pool with sun-burnt Spain. Nor does the author attempt a connection.

HENRY W. NEVINSON



VIVE LE SPORT

In a topsy-turvy world, where the only exercise of twenty million people is to watch four men playing tennis, or thirty men playing rugger, it is not surprising that so many are exhausted if they run ten yards to catch a bus. But what can one expect from a body that is folded up on railway seats, pleated in office chairs or incarcerated in baby cars. Here is the way to put matters right. Every morning, as regularly as you brush your hair, put a dash of Eno's "Fruit Salt" in a glass of water and drain the gay refreshing draught. Easily and efficiently it will do its work; cleansing the body, toning up the system and leaving you as jaunty as a javelin-thrower.

SHORTER NOTICES

Sociology. By MORRIS GINSBERG. Home University Library. *Thornton Butterworth.* 2s. 6d.

After the first reading of Professor Ginsberg's able and compact little book one is doubtful whether there can be such a thing as sociology, so destructive are his criticisms of its foundations. To take some examples at random: there are no pure racial types in existence, except perhaps a few handfuls of Andaman Islanders; worse, perhaps there never were any. Race (if the term means anything) does not correspond with culture and the big brains are not necessarily the best brains. As for culture: "It is by no means to be assumed that, in respect of order and continuity of development, the different elements within culture must necessarily follow the same line." "We can point to no order of ideas or social institutions whose growth can be traced through a regular sequence of stages repeated in the same order among different peoples." There is no direct evolution from magic to science. There is no "group mind." The social behaviour of men is not comparable with that of herd animals. The origins of altruism are not to be found simply in maternal instinct. Everything about man, in fact, is complex: so the primitive golden age of pure types and pure instincts is just another phantasy of outcast Adam's. After the second reading the gloomy mood of the child whose toy has been broken gives way to that of the blind man who suddenly sees the light. What a discipline for the mind, what a bible for social health might not sociology become if there were more workers as logical and as patient as Professor Ginsberg! His remarks on savage and civilised mentality are alone worth weeks of study.

Sons of Sawdust: with Paddy O'Flynn's Circus in Western Ireland. Written and Illustrated by EDWARD SEAGO. *Putnam.* 10s. 6d.

If life in Paddy O'Flynn's moribund circus touring mainly a poverty stricken area of small villages and minor towns lacks the glamour that hovers over the sawdust of more prosperous shows, all the courage of the tent and van folk is there; with, for background, the strange and attractive melancholy of the Irish scene, which with pen and pencil—the illustrations are delightful—Mr. Seago depicts so naturally. Mr. Seago has a true artist's love and understanding of the vagabond. He tells the story of these friendly, kindly, resourceful, hard living and hard working, but impractical people, who must presently, we know, be scattered; for O'Flynn's circus will soon be, if it is not already, a thing of the past.

Middlesex, Old and New. By MARTIN S. BRIGGS. *Allen and Unwin.* 8s. 6d.

Although practically the whole of London proper lies in Middlesex, and has always overshadowed the county, actually it has been the last of the counties to feel the pressure of Cobbett's wen. Its urbanisation, indeed, has been of quite recent origin, but it has been rapid and overwhelming, and Mr. Briggs explains how widespread has been the cockneyfication, and how swift and well-planned must be the measures taken, if what is left of rural Middlesex is to be spared. To those who know Mr. Briggs mainly as an early champion of the Baroque and even the Rococo in architecture, it is interesting to find him among those who are striving to prevent the complete bungalowisation of this England The little work is an agreeable record of the past, charmingly illustrated by the author.

Flying Girl. By ELLY BEINHORN. *Bles.* 16s.

More, probably than any other book dealing primarily with flight, this story of her flying trip round the world by the famous German airwoman brings home to the reader that flying even on a major scale has been definitely demonstrated as a means of locomotion. Miss Beinhorn was not out to break records, and, although she was unquestionably attracted to flight for the sake of flying, she is also a perfectly frank sight-seer. She tells us of her flying adventures, but one is as much

A NEW PUBLICATION

The Fascist Quarterly

Vol. I. No. 1. Price 2/6

CONTENTS

The Philosophy of Fascism . Sir Oswald Mosley
Britain's Empire Shall Live . . . William Joyce
The Nazi Movement in Perspective . James Drennan
Corporate Economics . Alexander Raven Thompson
The Cancer of Europe . Major-General J. F. C. Fuller
Social Democracy in Decay . . . John Beckett
Corporate State or Crime State? A. K. Chesterton
Notes of the Quarter

Published January 20. Obtainable through all Newsagents or from B.U.F. Headquarters, 33 King's Road, S.W.3. ©

"His stimulating book"—DAILY MAIL

GRAHAM SETON HUTCHISON's *Challenge*

"The author has held important administrative posts, has travelled widely and writes with much knowledge and experience of current affairs. The author's passionate sincerity and the force of his ideas demand careful attention."—*Daily Mail.* "Colonel Hutchison has written a splendidly exhilarating book, which, apart from the author's happy style of writing, deserves earnest consideration."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph.* (*Author of "Meteor," "Footslogger," etc.*) **8/6**

BISHOP KNOX's

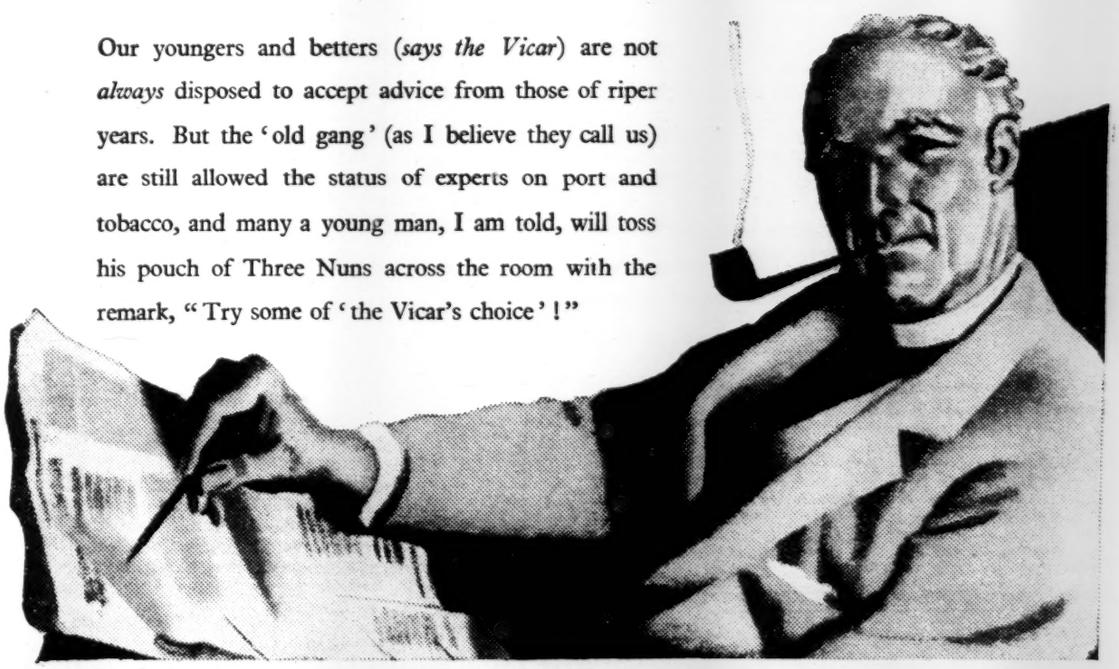
Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, 1847-1934

"Dr. Knox's lively book . . . teems with tales of days long past."—*Morning Post.* "The most important Evangelical autobiography of recent years."—*Record.* "A great record of a long life."—*Manchester Guardian.* "So much mellow humour pervades this volume."—*Daily Telegraph* Illustrated **18/-**

HUTCHINSON

WISE IN THEIR GENERATION

Our youngers and betters (*says the Vicar*) are not *always* disposed to accept advice from those of riper years. But the 'old gang' (as I believe they call us) are still allowed the status of experts on port and tobacco, and many a young man, I am told, will toss his pouch of Three Nuns across the room with the remark, "Try some of 'the Vicar's choice'!"



THREE NUNS *The original tobacco of curious cut — 1/2½d. an ounce*

224

Issued by STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON, *Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd., St. Andrew Square, Glasgow*

interested in the countries and peoples she has seen, as in the technicalities of her chosen method of travel. Her description of African bush and desert, and of India, Burma, Singapore, Japan and Australia, whence she flew, and of South America, where she flew, have a curious freshness due perhaps to the aerial approach.

Youth on the Prow. By CHRISTINA WHITEHEAD. *Duckworth.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

This book does not fall neatly into any category. It will not please the retired colonel's wife who asks the circulating library for a good novel, nor will it excite the modern schoolboy, suckled on Edgar Wallace and weaned on Jeans. It might be a Victorian boy's book, Ballantyne with the religion left out and written in a more distinguished style. It is an account of explorers and slave-traders in the Sudan of the 1860's, including some historical figures, like Sir Herbert Baker. The book has a curious artless charm, and is obviously the work of a writer soaked in nineteenth-century literature and naturally gifted for narrative. It can be recommended as a belated specimen of Victorian sincerity and elegance, probably written by an enchanting old lady who visited the Sudan as a girl fifty years ago.

Week-end Competitions

No. 255

Set by V. Sackville-West

Most families have their own set of private expressions. There are the almost classical examples of "Heygate," and "Susan volunteer," which in Edwardian days obtained a currency even outside the households to which they owed their origin; useful phrases, which filled a gap in the language, and met a need. Then, again, came the Bromide book, now almost forgotten, but at the time of its popularity providing us with a neat label for the less stimulating members of our acquaintance. "Bromide," it is true, was no family expression so far as we know; still, it owed its creation to the same instinct.

Another label which proved convenient was provided by the title of a play: *Boots and Doormats*. One discovered then how readily one's friends fell into one or the other of the two categories.

In one household I know, the exclamation "That man Smith!" stands for any unknown offender, on whose shoulders the blame for anything or everything may be laid. The original Smith, whose real name I suppress out of regard to the libel laws of our country, derived his existence from a harmless and on the whole efficient plumber, whose boiler once had the misfortune to burst or freeze, I forget which; since which disaster Smith has had everything laid at his door, from bad weather to an injudicious financial investment. He has unconsciously conferred a real benefit on the household which invented him as a scapegoat. "That man Smith!" lets off a lot of steam.

"Garden railings" is another phrase. It implies the physical pleasure derived from running a stick along iron railings, and is extensible also to other small but vivid physical pleasures of the same type, such as to opening a drawer which runs very smoothly, or to kicking up dry leaves on an autumn walk, or to getting into a warm bath when one is cold and chilled, or even to a long drink when one is very thirsty.

Surely competitors must be able to provide analogous phrases from their own experience?

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best contributions of six phrases with explanatory notes. Entries must not exceed 400 words in length.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, February 8.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

BUMPUS

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

The Bookshop of

J. & E. BUMPUS Ltd.

350 OXFORD STREET, W.1

will, on February 4th, 1935, be moved to new premises at

477, OXFORD STREET, W.1

upon the South side of the Street between North Audley Street and Park Street, and Orchard Street and Portman Street.

REMOVAL SALE

Last few days to take advantage of this opportunity of acquiring good books at a remarkably low price.

BOOKS

For cleaning Silver, Electro Plate &c

"Goddard's" Plate Powder

Sold everywhere 6d 1/- 2/- & 3/6

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 253

Set by Norman Collins

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best Happy Family pack giving suitable names, preferably alliterative, for any of the following:

A civil servant, a novelist, a transport minister, an armaments manufacturer, a film star (male), a film star (female), a publisher, an airman, a clergyman, a singer, a stamp collector, and a tax inspector. (As an example of a new Happy Family name we suggest "Miss Tapp, the Typist.")

Report by Norman Collins

Happy Families (Childless Couples and Bigger-Birth-Rate Bishops please note) consist of a father and mother and two children—and not merely of a head of the family, as the indefatigable Mr. William Bliss so rightly pointed out. Nevertheless, some hundreds more competitors than I care to remember appreciated the care-free spirit in which the competition was set and proceeded to reveal their wit, wisdom, or, I am sorry to say, their almost unbelievable ineptitude for devising anything resembling suitable names for a new pack: my waste-paper basket was soon full of the entries of competitors who had failed to observe the subtle alliteration in the specimen "Miss Tapp, the Typist." It was interesting to observe the relative popularity or unpopularity of the various trades, callings, and professions. Some 90 per cent. of the competitors called the clergyman "Mr. Cloth" (though a few of the enterprising suggested "Mr. Creed" or "Mr. Collect," or even "Mr. Clerestory,") but 99.9 (approx.) per cent. called the publisher Mr. Puff, just as the setter of the competition knew they would, and the remainder toyed prettily with such names as Mr. Pimp, Mr. Pander, and even, I regret to say, Mr. Pigge. Isolated examples commended themselves: for instance, Mr. Tottup the Tax-Collector, Mr. Tootnot the Transport Minister (both from the ingenious "Redling"); Mr. Altitude the Airman, and "Mr. Fanmail the Filmstar" (whom I had expected to meet more frequently) from Mr. Allan M. Laing; "Mr. Sitz, the Civil Servant" from "Charpat"; and "Mr. Angelmaker the Armaments Manufacturer" from H. C. Riddell. But for extreme excellence the first prize is awarded to Mr. F. R. A. Armstrong, and the second to Miss Angela Milne.

FIRST PRIZE

Mr. Spats, the Civil Servant.
Mr. Nobelprize, the Novelist.
Mr. Tricycle-Track, the Transport Minister.
Mr. Annihilate, the Armaments Manufacturer.
Mr. Flick, the Film Star.
Miss Fade-out, the Film Star.
Mr. Preface, the Publisher.
Mr. Ambidexter, the Airman.
Mr. Cassock, the Clergyman.
Miss Shrill, the Singer.
Mr. Surcharge, the Stamp Collector.
Mr. Triplicate, the Tax Inspector.

F. R. A. ARMSTRONG

SECOND PRIZE

Mr. Puff, the Publisher.
Mr. Nibs, the Novelist.
Mr. Cloth, the Clergyman.
Mr. Snug, the Civil Servant.
Mr. Sharp, the Singer.
Mr. Stick, the Stamp Collector.
Mr. Touch, the Tax Inspector.
Mr. Autograph, the Airman.

London Amusements

MATINEES

All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

ALHAMBRA. Wednesday & Saturday.
The Bing Boys Are Here.

APOLLO. Hyde Park Corner. Wed. & Sat.

COMEDY. Ten Minute Alibi. Wed., Sat.

DRURY LANE. Cinderella. Daily at 2.0

DUKE of YORK'S. Season of Ballet. W., S

HAYMARKET. Wed. and Sat
The Moon in the Yellow River.

HIPPODROME. Yes, Madam ? Th. & Sat.

KINGSWAY. Murder in Motley. Wed. & Sat.

LYRIC. Theatre Royal. Wed. & Sat.

PHOENIX. Mary Read. Thurs., Sat.

PICCADILLY. Wednesday & Saturday.
The Barretts of Wimpole Street.

SAVOY. Hi-Diddle Diddle ! Wed., Sat.

ST. JAMES'. The Shining Hour. Wed., Thur.

S. MARTIN'S. Wind & the Rain. Tues., Fri.

SHAFTESBURY. The Dominant Sex. Th., S.

WESTMINSTER. The Convict. Weds. & Sats.

WYNDHAM'S. Sweet Aloes. Wed. & Sat.

OPERA AND BALLET

DUKE OF YORK'S. Temple Bar 5122.
Evenings 8.45. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
A SEASON OF BALLET.
Repertory of 22 Ballets.—Four Nightly.

THEATRES

ALHAMBRA, Leic. Sq. (Whitehall 2525.)
EVENINGS at 8.30. Mats., WEDS. & SATS., at 2.30.
GEORGE ROBEY & VIOLET LORAINE in
THE BING BOYS ARE HERE.
LAST NIGHT FEB. 9.

APOLLO. (Ger. 2663). 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
HYDE PARK CORNER by Walter Hackett.
MARION LORNE. GODFREY TEARLE.
GORDON HARKER. J. H. ROBERTS.

COLISEUM, Charing Cross. Temple Bar 3161.
Twice Daily at 2.30 & 8.30.
LEW LESLIE'S NEW PRODUCTION
BLACKBIRDS OF 1935,
featuring VALAIDA.

COMEDY. 8.30. WED., SAT., 2.30. Whi. 2578.
TEN MINUTE ALIBI
LONDON'S LONGEST RUN. LAST 4 WEEKS.

DRURY LANE. Tem. 7171.
Twice Daily at 2 & 7.45.
CINDERELLA PANTOMIME.
Produced by JULIAN WYLIE.

HAYMARKET. (Whi. 9832.) 8.30, sharp.
MATS., WED. and SAT., at 2.30.
THE MOON
IN THE YELLOW RIVER
By DENIS JOHNSTON.

"A PLAY OF GENIUS IN EVERY SCENE AND LINE." *Morning Post.*
"OTHER PLAYS WE MAY BE GLAD TO SEE ONCE. THIS ONE WE COULD SEE AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH ADDED ENJOYMENT EACH TIME." *Daily Mail.*
"A PLAY OF RARE THEATRICAL VITALITY." *Times.*

HIPPODROME. 8.15. Thur., Sat., 2.30. (Ger. 3272).
BOBBY HOWES & BINNIE HALE in
"YES, MADAM ?"
Vera Pearce, Wylie Watson, Bertha Belmore.

KINGSWAY. (Hol. 4032).
EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.
ENID STAMP-TAYLOR, BERNARD LEE in
MURDER IN MOTLEY.

LYRIC. Ger. 3686-7. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
MARIE TEMPEST MADGE TITHERADGE ROBERT DOUGLAS.
in **THEATRE ROYAL.** Produced by Noel Coward.

PHOENIX. 8.15. Thurs., Sat., 2.30. Tem. 8611.
FLORA ROBSON in
"MARY READ."

PICCADILLY. 8.15. Wed., Sat., 2.30. Ger. 4506.
GWEN FFRANGCON DAVIES in
THE BARRETTS of WIMPOLE STREET

ST. JAMES' Whitehall 3903.
Evgs. 8.30. Mats., Wed., Thurs., 2.30.
THE SHINING HOUR
with GLADYS COOPER, RAYMOND MASSEY.

ST. MARTIN'S. Tem. 1443. 8.30, Tu., Fri., 2.30.
THE WIND AND THE RAIN.
NOW IN ITS 2ND YEAR.
Transferring to Queen's Theatre Feb. 18th.

SAVOY. 8.30. Wed., Sat., 2.30. Tem. 8888.
Doug. BYNG, Greta NISSEN, Reg. GARDINER,
in the Walker-Nesbitt Revue,
"HI-DIDDLE DIDDLE !"

SHAFTESBURY. (Gerrard 6666).
Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Thurs. & Sat., at 2.30.
THE DOMINANT SEX.
By Michael Egan.

WESTMINSTER. For 2 weeks ONLY.
Mon., Feb. 4th, at 8, subs. 8.30. MATS., W. & S., 2.30,
SIR JOHN MARTIN HARVEY in
THE CONVICT,
An adaptation of Dickens' "Great Expectations."
Jean Cadell, Thea Holme, Wilfrid Walter.
1s. 6d. to *7s.* incl., all bookable. (Vic. 0283).

WYNDHAM'S. Temple Bar 3028.
Evenings 8.30, Matinees Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
DIANA WYNYARD in
SWEET ALOES, by Jay Mallory.

PICTURE THEATRES

ACADEMY CINEMA, Oxford St. Ger. 2981.
WILLY FORST'S
Viennese Sensation of Europe,
MASKERADE (A),
with Paula Wessely.

EVERYMAN (Opposite Hampstead Tube Station).
ROBERT LYNEN (Star of *Poil de Carrotte*)
in DUVIVIER'S
LE PETIT ROI (U).
Parking facilities. Seats bookable by 'phone, Ham 2285.

Don't miss the great RUSSIAN FILM:
"NEW BABYLON"
also "SHADOW OF THE MINE" (German).
Friday Feb. 1st, at 6.30 and 8.45 p.m.
ARCHWAY CENTRAL HALL (Opp. Highgate Tube).
Sat. Feb. 2nd, at 2.0, 4.15, 6.30 and 8.45.
PALM RESTAURANT, 11, Whitechapel Rd., E.1.
Sun. Feb. 3rd, at 2.0, 4.15, 6.30 and 8.45.
WOBURN HOUSE, Upper Woburn Place, W.C.1.
Tickets: 3/-, 2/- (resd.) and 1/3 from
International Films, 86, Gray's Inn Rd., W.C.1.

ART GALLERIES

THREE WOMEN PAINTERS at the LEICESTER GALLERIES, Leicester Square. 10–6 daily.
(1) MARIETTE LYDIS—Paintings and Drawings.
(2) OROVIDA—Paintings.
(3) FRANCES HODGKINS—Paintings and Water-cols.

FOR SALE, TO LET AND WANTED

GREEN GIRDLE IDEA.
WELWYN (30 mins. King's Cross), carries out thoroughly the green girdle idea that London is adopting rather late and half-heartedly. Thus this lovely healthy town does not lose contact with open country. A house in perfect taste, with 3 bedrooms, 2 living rooms, garage and large garden, can be rented for £66 p.a. Houses for sale £540 to £925. All town amenities with rural beauty and quiet. A.B.C. Guide from N. S. HOWARD, Estate Office, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

GENUINELY modern steel-concrete house, just completed head of Bucks Valley, 45 mins. London. Flat roof sun nursery. 2 Recep. 3 bed, etc. Garage. Nominal price quick sale. Box 668, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

CHELSEA. 23 Bramerton Street. Quiet comfortable Divan bed-sitting room. Gas fire, ring, meter. Geyser bath. Electric light. Moderate.

FURNISHED or unfurnished rooms to let in Mecklenburgh Sq. 'Phone: Tem. 6020.

N.W.3. Large bed-sitting room, 2 divan beds, 25s. p.w. Also unfurnished garden flat, quiet house, 25s. 6d. 22 Belsize Ave.

£100 P.A. inclusive. Attractive panelled flat, Gt. James Street, W.C.1. 1 large recep., kitchen-dining room, 1 bed., bathroom. 2½ yrs. lease; unfurnished. 'Phone: Holborn 7921.

WESTMINSTER. Young bachelor, seeks another, preferably student, appreciative quiet, rent 2 fur. rooms, his small house. Box 669, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

REPERTORY THEATRES

BIRMINGHAM **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.30. Mats., Wed., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.
1066 and All That. Words and Lyrics by Reginald Arkell, Music by Alfred Reynolds, from the Book by R. J. Yeatman and W. C. Sellar.

CROYDON **Repertory.**
Evenings 8. Sat., 5 & 8.15.
The Late Christopher Bean.
By Emlyn Williams.

HARROGATE **Opera House.**
Evenings 8.15. Sat., 6.35 & 9.
The Late Christopher Bean.
By Emlyn Williams.

LIVERPOOL **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.45. Mat., Sat., 2.30.
Biography. By S. N. Behrman.

MANCHESTER **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.30.
A Flutter in the Dovecote.
By Dominic Roche.

NORTHAMPTON **Repertory.**
Evenings 6.30 & 8.50.
The Rotters. By H. F. Maltby.

PLYMOUTH **Repertory.**
Evenings 7.45. Fri., 8.15. Mat., Sat., 2.45.
Jane. By Harry Nichols & W. Lestocq.

The Repertory Theatres whose announcements appear above are members of the Association of Repertory Theatres. *For information concerning Theatres belonging to this Association, or qualified to belong to it, apply to the Honorary Secretary, Bache Matthews, 7 Tavistock Place, London, W.C.1.*

APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

The Senate invite applications for the University Chair of Classics tenable at Birkbeck College. Salary £1,000 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on February 19th, 1935, by the ACADEMIC REGISTRAR, University of London, S.W.7, from whom further particulars should be obtained.

CITY OF WAKEFIELD
PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Applications are invited for the position of LIBRARY ASSISTANT (MALE) at the City Library. Salary in accordance with Grade B (1) of the Council's Grading Scheme (£130 to £225 per annum, according to age).
Applicants must be about 21 years of age; be at present engaged in Public Library work and must possess Certificates of the Library Association in cataloguing and classification.
The post is subject to the provisions of the Local Government and Other Officers' Superannuation Act, 1922.
Applications should be received by the undersigned on or before Saturday, the 16th February, 1935.
Town Hall, Wakefield. T. NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW, Town Clerk.
29th January, 1935.

LADY recommends excellent man for garden, pigs, poultry, carpentry, etc. Drives car. Wife housework, sewing, care children, etc. Cottage. Home counties preferred. Personal refs. Box 666 and C., N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

GERMAN LADY wishes post as mother's help; would pay £2 monthly towards board. MISS MARIA VON ELBE, Karnitz b. Greifenberg, Pommern.

YOUNG WRITER, competent shorthand typist, seeks post. Research and general assistance. Box 663, N.S. & N., 10 Gt. Turnstile, London, W.C.1.

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Mr. Trapp, the Transport Minister.
Mr. Assets, the Armaments Manufacturer.
Mr. Flash, the Film Star.
Miss Form, the Film Star. ANGELA MILNE

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 110.—"JUMBLE" CRYPTO

ENATEK	ALEHIC
WTLOET	FLTEEV
ARDENS	RAAERR
TEENHE	GTRETL
TRESHN	IDWREO
HTHHTC	IAICPE
AAEOKM	NLRCES

PROBLEM 108.—GOLF AT BUNKERED-BY-HECK

The full solution of this problem, which is much more elaborate than most problems so far published, takes up a great deal of space. The following solution is abbreviated.

First, it is found by trial *plus* inference that the cards of the four players were as under:

Hole No.	Bogey.	A (Jones).	B (Smith).	C (Robinson).	D (Brown).
1	4	4 =	4 =	4 =	4 =
2	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
3	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
4	4	5 −	5 −	5 −	3 +
5	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
6	4	5 −	3 +	3 +	3 +
7	3	4 −	4 −	4 −	5 −
8	3	4 −	4 −	4 −	5 −
9	5	3 +	3 +	3 +	3 +
10	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
11	3	4 −	4 −	5 −	5 −
12	3	4 −	4 −	5 −	5 −
13	4	5 −	5 −	3 +	3 +
14	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
15	3	4 −	5 −	5 −	5 −
16	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
17	3	4 −	5 −	5 −	5 −
18	5	4 +	4 +	4 +	4 +
		74	74	74	74	74

The results against bogey were as shown against each, viz.:—

A. Jones 1 down.
B. Smith 1 up.
C. Robinson 3 up.
D. Brown 5 up.

so A paid for lunch.

In the foursome match the results were:

	A	B	C	D	Net Won
A		+1	+2	+3	6
B	−1		+1	+2	2
C	−2	−1		+1	—
D	−3	−2	−1		—
Net Lost			2	6	

C and D lost 12*s.* and 4*s.* and A must also have suffered a net loss of 2*s.* 6*d.* so that the total loss of the three came to 18*s.* 6*d.*, i.e., three times seventy four pence. A won 12*s.* so the cost of lunch was 14*s.* 6*d.*

PROBLEM 107.—JOHN CITIZEN

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to: S. E. Wilson, Lynmoor, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent.

There were 182 correct solutions. *Three* points are awarded.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the sender of a correct solution selected at random.

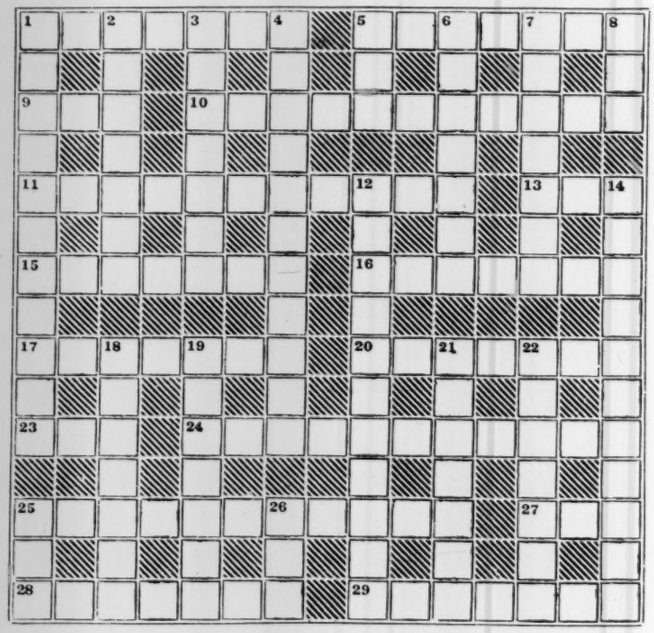
In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10*s.* Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150. Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 256

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
E. G. Lewis, 74 Church Street, W.8.

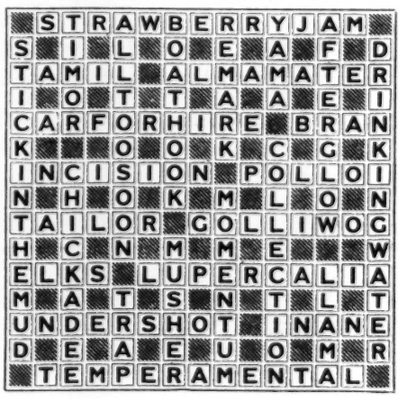
ACROSS

1. "Bloody" ruffians of the 18th century.
5. He may cry about nothing at first, and in the end you can see it's put on.
9. It looks as though this should be good fish.
10. This ought to be a happy place for Bedouins.
11. A client of 1 down would no doubt bear one.
13. Speed initially.
15. Can a rat change its colour?
16. Bunnies' variety of lawn tennis.
17. Bewitching half-sister to a King.
20. This sailor no doubt had much need to repent.
23. Indication of a university fellow returning.
24. A coin whose beauty makes it costly.
25. Suitable consolation in a heat wave.
27. A game start.
28. Times do alter for the dressmaker.
29. Pitch and toss makes some people so.

DOWN

1. His cures are magical.
2. Characters that are distinctly Jewish.
3. He burnt his fingers to show his repentance.
4. How men relax their attention in company.
5. An Indian Civil Servant can easily get this award with a little twisting.
6. How the mirror will disparage.
7. Awkward situation when Miss Woodhouse gets the lid on upside down.
8. Nothing finishes an old bird.
12. Taxes on young scholars.
14. This work should be done before coming to terms.
18. Shot at with questions.
19. Expressions of outlook.
21. Often provides "fairy" lights.
22. The Calcutta sweep's nationality?
25. Not the part of the machinery where the water goes.
26. Popularly associated with the West.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



Company Meeting

LLOYDS BANK LIMITED

MR. J. BEAUMONT PEASE'S ADDRESS

THE Seventy-seventh Ordinary General Meeting of the Shareholders was held on Friday, January 25th, in London.

Mr. J. Beaumont Pease (Chairman of the Bank) after referring to the deaths of Mr. S. Samuel and Mr. J. W. Jervis, said (in part):

Our published Reserve has been increased to £8,500,000 by the re-transfer of £500,000 from our internal funds. You will remember that in 1931 we took £2,500,000 from our outer Reserve to meet the exceptional depreciation in the value of our investments. In 1932 we re-transferred £500,000, and this year we are doing the same. The balance of £1,500,000 remains intact in our internal funds. The market value of investments is considerably in excess of our book figures.

Our Current, Deposit and other Accounts, standing at £372,140,172 represent an increase of £7½ millions over last year.

Our Acceptances show a small but welcome increase, and this also applies to the items Endorsements, Guarantees, etc.

On the Assets side of our Balance Sheet there is a big reduction in the amount of our Treasury Bills, to the extent of £14,000,000, and this is partly offset by an increase of between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 in our Commercial Bills, and over £3,000,000 in our Advances. You will recognise in these two latter items an encouraging rise in the demand for greater banking accommodation. Money at Call and Short Notice also increased by £13,000,000. On the other hand our Investments have decreased by nearly £2,000,000. There is no special feature calling for remark in the rest of our assets.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

Our Profit and Loss figure comes out at £1,651,505, and represents an increase over last year of £212,000. Shareholders will note with satisfaction that we are reaping the benefit of our conservative action in reducing our dividend in recent years. From our profits we have deducted the sum of £250,000, which we have placed to Contingencies Account, and we recommend the payment of dividends at the same rates as last year, leaving to be carried forward to next year a somewhat larger figure than that brought in.

The prudent banker, must have regard, not merely to the balance of his Profit and Loss Account on the 31st December, but also to the contingencies to be provided for arising out of the past year's trading. There are years when, after having written off any losses that have accrued during the year, he will deem it wise to make liberal provision for the future. In other years it may be justifiable to draw upon those contingencies.

The trade and banking cycle runs something like this:

First, a period of—plentiful money—low rates of interest—low ratio of overdrafts to deposits.

Then, a period swinging up to a peak of—active trade—strong demand for overdrafts—high rates of interest. At such a peak period a bank would be earning large gross profits.

It would be imprudent to distribute them because, in a subsequent period of—Diminishing trade—falling rates, bad debts would emerge. Interest on doubtful accounts would be reserved.

Then we come back to a period when, though interest rates may be low, Trade is again on the up-grade—bad debts are below the average—provisions previously made are found to be in excess of requirements—doubtful accounts become good and reserved interest can be brought into profits.

Along with this cycle (but not exactly coincident with it) comes the swing from overdraft to investment and vice versa.

INVESTMENTS

I stated last year that our business had recently shown a tendency to depart from a purely banking business and to take on more of the nature of an investment business. This tendency appears to be general, the investments of all the clearing banks for the month of December representing 30.2 per cent. of their deposits, whereas in 1929 they were only 15.2 per cent.

Eighteen months ago I worked out an analysis of the deposits of our bank. I divided them into the following categories: (1) "Trade"—which term includes manufacturing, wholesale and retail businesses, public utility undertakings, agriculture and other industries. (2) An omnibus title of "Personal and Professional." (3) "Finance," which includes banking, insurance, trust companies and other financial institutions, and all foreign balances. (4) "Government and other public municipal and local authorities." In 1931 I found that 25.6 per cent. of our deposits came under the heading of "Trade"; 61.8 per cent. under "Personal and Professional"; 8.8 per cent. under "Finance"; and 3.8 per cent. under "Government, etc." In the Balance Sheet which we are now discussing, at the end of December, 1934, the proportion under "Trade" has risen to 27.7 per cent.; "Personal and Professional" has fallen to 59.7 per cent.; "Finance" to 8.1 per cent.; and "Government, etc." has risen to 4.5 per cent.

NATIONALISATION OF BANKS

These are the actual facts, and the above classification represents in broad outline the actual owners of the deposits in our hands. Is it likely that they would willingly see their property put at the mercy of the whims of any political party by the nationalisation of the banks? And yet that is what is seriously threatened. The total amount of deposits in the Joint Stock Banks of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, if divided by £170, which is the average holding in the case of our bank, represents 14,000,000 depositors, and, even after allowing for some overlapping, there must be many million owners of these deposits, most of whom have votes. If and when the time comes, do you suppose they will cast their votes in favour of the proposed change in the status of the banks? What has recently happened in Australia suggests an answer to this question.

I have not time at this Meeting to go into all the fallacies and dangers involved in the proposal to nationalise industry and the banks, but I have no doubt you would warmly welcome any steps which we may think it advisable to take in defence of your business, and for the better education of public opinion as to the danger of the Socialist schemes for the nationalisation of industry, and more particularly as to what banks are, what they can and ought to do, and what is outside their functions and capabilities.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND

On the question of the Bank of England and the threats against that Institution, I shall content myself by making two short quotations from a pamphlet written by Mr. O. R. Hobson a few years ago: "Experience and the all but unanimous voice of the economists and financiers all over the world, as expressed, for example, at the international conferences at Brussels in 1920 and Genoa in 1922, is against the view that State control of the Central Bank is to be preferred to private control. The administration of the Bank of England has earned for itself a prestige and a general respect which is unique. The responsible elements of the Labour Party—will they deny it?—share that respect to the full." And again, "Was it not the Labour Government which took the responsibility and accepts the credit for putting into force the Dawes Plan for the reorganisation of the German financial system which in one of its cardinal provisions insists that the new German Bank of Issue is to be entirely free from governmental control or interference."

In confirmation of this individual opinion I should like to quote from the Macmillan Report: "It is not necessary in this country, as it was in the United States before the War, to create a new organ for the centralised control of the monetary system. For we have in the Bank of England an excellent instrument for the purpose; independent of political influences, yet functioning solely in the public interest; with long traditions and experience and clothed with vast prestige, yet not distrustful (as we have learnt in evidence) of evolutionary change or hesitant of new responsibilities; entrenched in the centre of the struggle for profit and with access to the arcana of the market, yet itself aloof and untinged by the motives of private gain." Unfortunately in all questions, whether political, financial or banking, men are prone to pay more attention to the bribes of easy promises for the future than to the benefits they have received from achievements in the past.

SUGGESTIONS FROM PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

My business is in practical every-day affairs, and every day I see in my daily work obvious reasons for our poor condition. Why cannot we pay our debts to America? Because she will not take our goods in payment. Why was Australia unable to send her barley to Belgium? Because she refused to accept Belgian glass. Why could not we sell our coal to Italy, and why were thousands of our miners idle in consequence? Because we would not buy Italian marble. Why cannot Manchester sell her goods to South America? Because exchange restrictions in that country prevent the dispatch of the purchase price. I could multiply such instances indefinitely. If our well-being depends on trade, and if trade is the exchange of goods between man and man and between nation and nation, these obvious obstacles must be removed if trade is again to flow freely. Surely it is not necessary to look for "some great thing" or to babble of the distant virtues of Abanas and Pharpars in the form of experiments with currency, or the nationalisation of banks, when some cure at any rate for the world's economic leprosy is so obviously at our doors.

This country has made considerable progress on the way to recovery without any spectacular measures, and has done much to show its sympathy with the eloquent statement of that great citizen of our Empire who recently spoke to us on the virtues of freedom. "International trade and commerce, which were supposed to pave a sure way to intercourse and better understanding among the nations and a peaceful world, have instead led to economic nationalism, and thereby opened up new sources of international friction and isolation." We in this country have endeavoured to combat that evil. We have shown a spirit of give and take; we have made a number of trade treaties with nearly a score of nations, and even our adoption of some measures of Protection, illogical as it might seem, have, I believe, helped to open the eyes of the world to the fact that excessive nationalism is an enemy to peace both political and economic. Peace in both these spheres is what to my mind the world so greatly needs. Let us continue to do all that we can to seek and ensue it.

The Report and Accounts were adopted.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

BANK CHAIRMEN—BANKING PROFITS AND SHARES—THE GOLD SCARE—WARNING TO SPECULATORS

I REGRET to see that some of the bank chairmen this year made rather naughty political speeches at their shareholders' meetings. Condemning nationalisation of the joint stock banks, they did their best to frighten their depositors, the electorate at large and the Labour Party executive in particular. Mr. Beaumont Pease, at the seventy-seventh ordinary general meeting of Lloyds Bank, said that there were many millions of owners of bank deposits "most of whom had votes." "Is it likely," he asked, "that they (the depositors) would willingly see their property put at the mercy of the whims of any political party by the nationalisation of the banks?" Note the emphasis on "whims." Apparently the Labour Party, which advocates nationalisation of the banks, is not allowed to have a serious economic programme of national development: it is presumed to have "whims"—and no mercy as well. In other words, if the Labour Party gets into power, it will seize your deposits and hand them over to a management consisting of men like Sir James Barrie and General Goering. I wonder if it has occurred to Mr. Beaumont Pease that one of the main incentives to nationalisation comes from the feeling that the bankers themselves indulge in such alarmist language and exhibit such political bias that before a Labour Government can get safely and effectively to work the bank directors must go. I know little of the intentions of a Labour Government but I see no reason to suppose that the standards of public life would be very different under its regime and that the banks, if nationalised, would be run less efficiently or less cheaply or less soundly. Co-ordination does not usually make for higher costs or for inefficiency and the general managers of the banks, who are already responsible for daily routine, will still manage, whatever happens. I agree with Mr. McKenna that nationalisation of the banks is not a popular, vote-catching cry, because no business man likes to deal with "a money trust" or money monopoly, but in the words of the City Editor of the *Times*: "If power really exists to create money . . . it seems hard to deny that it should be taken out of private hands and transferred to the State to be used for the community."

* * *

Several bank chairmen were concerned to show that the banks did not really pay huge dividends or make large profits in bad times as well as good. Mr. McKenna, for example, pointed out that the Midland distributed 16 per cent. on its paid-up capital but that this meant nothing because the paid-up capital had no relation to reserves. The great bulk of the capital had been issued at a premium and credited to the reserve fund, while other reserves had been built up by withholding a proportion of profits from shareholders over a long period. Mr. McKenna doubted if the dividends paid to the banks amounted to as much as 5 per cent. on the accumulated funds belonging to the shareholders. As for the actual profits, it appears that the banks can create them "with no more trouble than the making of entries in books," as the *Times* remarked about creating money. Last year, for example, the banks' profits were increased by the fact that smaller provision had to be made for bad and doubtful debts—thanks to improving trade. Thus, reserves which had previously been held for this purpose were released to the credit of the revenue account. Again, several of the banks show their profit figures after deduction of income tax. Therefore, even if their profits had remained stationary, their net profits would have shown an increase because of the reduction in tax last April. If the net figures of the Midland are "grossed up" it will be found that their profits last year actually show a slight decline. On a gross basis the aggregate profits of the "big six" banks last year increased by about 2½ per cent. so that in spite of the fall in short-term money rates it would be difficult to schedule the banking world as one of the distressed areas. The following table sets out the present market prices and dividend yields of the variable dividend shares of the "big six":

BANK SHARES WITH VARIABLE DIVIDEND

	1934.			Earnings	Dividend
Fully Paid.	Price	% Earned	% Paid	Yield %	Yield %
Barclays "B" £1	78/7½	15.0	14	£3 16 3	£3 11 3
Midland £1	91/–	20.8	16	£4 11 6	£3 10 3
National Provincial £6 ...	20	16.7	15	£4 1 0	£3 13 0
Martins	82/9	16.8	14	£4 1 3	£3 7 9
Partly Paid.					
Lloyds "A" £5 (£1 pd.) ...	62/7½	14.3	12	£4 11 3	£3 16 9
Midland £12 (£2½ pd.) ...	10½	20.8	16	5 1 6	£3 18 0
Nat. Provincial £20 (£4 pd.) ...	14½	16.7	15	4 9 6	£4 0 3
Westminster £4 (£1 pd.) ...	94/–	20.2	18	£4 6 0	£3 16 6
Martins £20 (£2½ pd.) ...	9	16.8	14	£4 13 3	£3 17 9

It is interesting to observe that the market is to-day valuing the total issued share capital of the "big six" banks, which is nominally about £69 millions, at no less than £260 millions. This is equivalent to over twenty-eight years' purchase of the net profits of the "big six" on the average of the past two years.

* * *

The "gold clause" uncertainty continues to upset the United States and, as our correspondents' column showed last week, to disturb the holidays of American travellers. (The growth of cynicism in the United States will really kill the issue business in time!) Commodity and security prices have fallen and Professors Warren and Pearson will no doubt be busy collecting further proof of their theory that the prices of things and the price of gold are inter-related. From more than one source I have been told what decision the Supreme Court will make in the "gold clause" case. A distinction is to be made between Government bonds and other bonds (i.e., the bonds of States, municipalities, private corporations and mortgagees). The Court will hold that the Government cannot modify a contract to which it is itself a party as this would amount to confiscation, which is unconstitutional; but that as Congress can alter the gold value of the dollar it is legal for States, municipal authorities and private corporations to pay in depreciated dollars on their gold bonds if Congress "devalues." The Government, I am told, has taken steps to meet this decision by having a Bill drafted which will pass Congress in one day, imposing a tax at source on interest paid in gold on Government gold bonds, the tax amounting to the difference between a gold dollar and a depreciated dollar. The tax may be difficult to apply in the case of the "tax free" gold bonds, but no doubt the Government will find a way round by calling the tax not an income tax, but a special duty. A speculative investor might take advantage of the American gold scare by buying the shares of Homestake, an American gold mining company which have fallen this year from 430 to 335—to yield 10¾ per cent. on the basis of $36 dividends per share.

* * *

Gale warning to speculators in London: Deep depression centred over certain commodity markets (ground-nuts, pepper and shellac) may spread over Stock Exchange. Caution is advised.

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Company Meeting

WESTMINSTER BANK LIMITED

THE HON. RUPERT E. BECKETT'S ADDRESS

THE Annual Ordinary General Meeting was held at the Head Office, London, on Wednesday, January 30th. The Hon. Rupert E. Beckett, Chairman, presiding. Having referred to the retirement of Mr. H. R. Arbuthnott, and the appointment of Mr. Arthur M. Asquith and Sir George Ernest Schuster as directors, the Chairman said (in part):

The four major features of the banking year have been:

1. A slight decline in the volume of bank deposits, not arrested—apart from the usual seasonal movement—until the closing months of the year;
2. The absence of any materially increased demand for advances;
3. The heavy reduction in the total of bills discounted;
4. The further increase in investments;

in which features there is focused a strong light on the present financial and economic conditions.

BANK'S BALANCE SHEET

This Bank's experience during the past year has conformed to this general statement, for, although our Balance Sheet shows an increase of nearly £11 millions in the total of Current, Deposit, and other accounts, the average figures for the year are below those of 1933.

In like manner, while this Bank's Advances on the average of the year were almost identical with those of 1933, the present Balance Sheet figure exceeds that of December, 1933, by approximately £8 millions. It will be observed that the proportion of our Advances to our Deposits is only 36 per cent., as against a proportion, in more normal times, of about 50 per cent. As yet there is little or no evidence of any general reawakening in the demand for bank accommodation.

Bills Discounted appear in the Balance Sheet before you at £33 millions, which is £8½ millions less than a year ago.

The depletion of our bill case is the explanation of the increase in the Bank's Investments item, which at the end of the year was up by a further £6½ millions, as compared with the previous year end.

Having regard to the almost continuous rise in the prices of gilt-edged securities the Directors felt that the time was opportune to restore to the Reserve the amount of £1,820,157 specially allocated in December, 1931, to meet the depreciation existing at that time in the value of the Bank's holdings of British Government securities, and this was accordingly effected. The Premises item of our Balance Sheet now appears at £5,430,082—a total which cannot be regarded as excessive.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

The Profit and Loss Account records an increase of just under £60,000 over the previous year, and your Directors have allocated £100,000 to the Premises Account and £200,000 to Officers Pension Fund, which allocations are similar to those of 1932 and 1933.

After provision for the dividends which your Directors have declared at the same rates as before, viz., 18 per cent. per annum less tax on the partly-paid shares, and 12½ per cent. per annum less tax on the fully-paid shares, we are enabled to carry forward £481,084.

The Chairman then dealt with the Associated Institutions, the Ulster Bank Limited and the Westminster Foreign Bank Limited, and continuing, he said:

The history of the past year demonstrates that, on the whole, the trade of this country has made a fair measure of progress, not altogether uniform, but sufficient to justify the claim that the worst of the depression has been put behind us, and recognising the real value of the achievements of the past year, we have good reason for maintaining confidence in the year upon which we have lately entered. The sound budgetary position of the country remains unimpaired.

Statistical evidence points convincingly to an improvement in British industry and trade during the past twelve months. The continued upward trend of the index of industrial production, which constitutes one of the best guides to the course of industry, is but one of many favourable features. The large figures of unemployment are apt to obscure the considerable growth in the numbers actually in work. It is not generally recognised for instance that the average level of employment in 1934 was approximately the same as in 1929 and much higher than in any other year since the War.

It is particularly gratifying to find the heavy industries leading in the movement towards recovery.

The effects of restricted foreign trade are nowhere more clearly visible than in the recent experiences of the textile trades. The past year has added to their difficulties, and producers were hard put to it to maintain the improvement achieved in 1933. Building, stimulated by low rates of interest, reached a high level of activity in many parts of the country. A pleasing feature of the past year was the higher level of retail sales registered in all parts of the country, indicating the widespread nature of the revival. In British overseas trade, progress was maintained. An increase in value of 8½ per cent. was registered in imports and one of 7 per cent. in exports.

Our position must continue to give grave concern, however, while there still remain two million unemployed. Amelioration of their lot can come only by way of re-engagement in the industrial organism, and however optimistic one's hopes may be for the further expansion of our domestic market, this alone will not and cannot be sufficient. We are forced therefore to look to our export trade, by which the greatness of our country was founded and built up, and by which alone can be preserved the structure we have reared.

In the commercial sphere there lies much cause for misgiving. To my mind, no development of recent years is more to be regretted than that of economic nationalism or self-sufficiency, whose logical end would appear to be a world-wide series of closed citadels, with the passage of goods from one to another entirely prohibited. The pursuit of such a policy means retrogression, not progress. But the pursuit goes on! There is no sign of any relaxation of the strangling grip of trade restrictions in all their varying forms—tariffs, quotas, import licences, and the like. On the contrary, newer forms are being introduced. Added to all these disabilities, there is the all-important one of exchange restrictions, which abound in so many parts of the world, and of which there appears no hope of early easement.

These formidable obstacles continue to exercise a stranglehold upon export trade. The two outstanding needs of the present time are the establishment of an international monetary standard promising some stability, and a removal of the artificial barriers by which trade is at present obstructed.

A truth to be emphasised to-day is that the world is an economic unit, complete and indivisible. Must there not come a time when all nations will realise that attempts at isolation and self-sufficiency are vain, serving only to accentuate their present difficulties and to prejudice the ultimate welfare of their peoples? Yet there are those in these islands, who, disregarding the overwhelming evidence of the essential interdependence of nations, advocate a policy of isolation. This seems to me a futile aspiration for a world-wide empire like ours, with frontiers conterminous to other countries in almost every portion of the globe.

How is it possible for a nation with such far-flung connexions to isolate herself? Let me remind you that even our protective tariff still admits into this country many million pounds' worth of imports year by year. The great bulk of these goods are such as we must import, because Nature has not endowed us with the ability to grow or produce them. On the other side, we export something like one-quarter of the whole product of British industry. Should the industries concerned be sacrificed in order to gratify the ideal of self-sufficiency? For let it not be imagined for one moment that we can isolate ourselves and retain our export trade.

The call in this country for isolation, self-sufficiency—call it what you will—is but an echo of a development which has spread like a virulent disease throughout the world. Whether from dictates of fear, to gratify a desire for prestige, or to secure a more balanced economy, almost every country has aimed at the elimination of imports of goods which can possibly be produced domestically.

The world, as I see it, is moving towards economic partitionment, whereas its aim should be economic unity. The full benefit of natural resources and of man's inventiveness cannot be reaped unless and until every constituent of the commonwealth of nations is performing that particular job for which geographical or human characteristics have best fitted it.

The present must be, by reason of world conditions, largely a period of marking time in the international sphere, until the unwisdom of the developments I have described has been proved by events. Meanwhile, let us continue to do whatever lies within our power to foster the enlargement of our trade, conserving our energy for a united attack upon the fundamental difficulties when circumstances become more propitious. This should mean a consolidation of our present advance, and hold out the promise of further progress in the future.

In conclusion I wish to refer to the attacks that have been made and continue to be made upon the British banking system, a subject of vital importance to bank depositors and shareholders alike. These attacks, whether well or ill informed, usually have their origin in a political creed which demands the elimination of the present proprietors and the placing of the banks under State control. The change is advocated, not after any event or series of events which has demonstrated that the banks have proved unworthy of the trust reposed in them—far from it. I claim that the banks of this country have surmounted the difficulties and complexities of recent years with enhanced prestige, and certainly with a record superior to that of any other group of banks in any country of the world. Is this the time, then, seriously to propose that the control of the banks should be taken out of the hands of those who have proved themselves and placed under the direction of a State department, and the savings of the millions of bank depositors made the basis of socialistic experiment; or to suggest that the advantages enjoyed by the public through the active competition between the banks adequately to serve their needs should be sacrificed under the dead hand of a bureaucracy? The danger is a real one, but you may be assured that our first concern will ever be to safeguard the interests of our depositors and the rights of our shareholders. In so doing, we shall also be serving the wider interests of the whole community, to which the banks of this country have made no mean contribution in the past. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.